

BOYS, READ THE RADIO ARTICLES IN THIS NUMBER

PLUCK AND LUCK

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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NEW YORK, JULY 23, 1924

Price 8 Cents

THE PHANTOM FIREMAN; OR, THE MYSTERY OF MARK HOWLAND'S LIFE.

By EX-FIRE-CHIEF WARDEN

AND OTHER STORIES



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PROLOGUE.

"Howland Brothers."

That was the sign over the door of a very prosperous business house on the west side in the city of New York. The two brothers, Mark and Henry, had been in business together some ten years or more, and had made a good deal of money. But when Mark, the younger of the two brothers, married the only daughter of a very wealthy couple, he was able to put a large capital into the business, and the result was a big income to both brothers. Henry had an equal interest in the profits of the business, but the bulk of the capital invested belonged to Mark and his wife.

A year after marriage Mark became the happy father of a fine boy, whom the fond mother called "Mark, Jr." The boy grew more like his father every day—so everybody said. One day Mark's wife's parents sailed for Europe on an extended tour. They never returned—the ship went to the bottom with all on board. That made Mark Howland and his wife very rich. The business of the Howland Brothers extended still farther and was reaching up into big figures when Mark's wife suddenly sickened and died, leaving her husband and young son to mourn her loss. That broke Mark up for a time, but by and by he began to devote himself to business again.

He had connected himself with old "No. 6" volunteer fire company, and the many daring exploits he performed at fires were the theme of conversation among his friends everywhere. They elected him foreman, and he had a picture of himself painted in fireman's costume, trumpet in hand which was hung up in the hall of the engine house. One day Henry said to him:

"Mark, you are liable to be killed any night at a fire. Why don't you make a will so as to make provision for your son in case anything should happen to you?"

"Why, bless my soul, I had not thought of that," replied Mark. "I'll attend to that this day. You'll take charge of my boy, will you not?"

"Yes, of course I would."

Mark went to his lawyer and had his will drawn up, making his boy his sole heir, with his brother as trustee and guardian of person and property. Weeks and months passed. Mark ran

to many great fires and greatly distinguished himself. He seemed to bear a charmed life, as he came out of places unscorched where other brave firemen perished. Henry began to go out with him of evenings, pretending that he, too, needed recreation, and Mark took great pleasure in having him with him. One night when he was drinking wine with Mark he managed to pour a few drops of a colorless fluid from a small vial into his brother's glass without being seen.

A half hour later Mark was in such a dazed condition that he did not know anything or anybody. Henry locked arms with him and marched him down a street which led toward the Hudson River. At the foot of the street lay a bark moored to the pier. It was an Italian vessel, called the Foscari, and a Captain Randini commanded her. The captain was pacing the deck of his vessel all alone and in the dark. As Henry and Mark approached the vessel the captain stops and listens to their footsteps. Then he approaches the side of the vessel and peers through the darkness.

"Is it you?" he asked, in a foreign accent.

"Yes," replied Henry. "Here he is."

The captain stepped ashore, took Mark in his arms, and hurried on board with him, followed by Henry. He carried his burden below, and was gone several minutes, when he reappeared on deck to join the other, who had waited for him.

"He is all right now," said the captain, in low tones.

"When do you sail?" the other asked, looking furtively around, as if suspicious of being overheard.

"At sunrise," was the reply.

"Everything is understood between us now, I suppose?"

"Yes. He is to be dropped overboard when we are well out to sea, without the knowledge of anyone on board. For that you have paid me one thousand dollars in cash, and nine thousand dollars on my return to port after the job has been done. Am I right?"

"Yes, that's it exactly."

"And you won't go back on me about the balance of the sum?"

"You do your part and I'll be sure to do mine," said Henry Howland, as he shook hands with the captain of the vessel and stepped ashore.

As he walked up the street a low chuckle escaped Henry Howland.

"The Foscari will never return to port, Captain Randini," he said, "and you'll never have the chance to call for the balance of your reward. You'll all go to the bottom together. One or a dozen is all the same to me, but I won't leave any witnesses behind me. Now for the other."

Turning into another street, he quickened his pace, and as he passed under the gaslights his face is seen to be one of sinister expressions, in which duplicity, treachery and avarice seem to predominate, though under cover of artful dissimulation. Straight to a hotel he goes, enters, ascends to a room to which he has the key, and is soon within. Opening a large valise, he carefully takes therefrom a small box about eight inches square by sixteen long, wrapped in paper, lays it on the bed, unwraps it, raises a lid, and proceeds to wind up what appears to be a harmless eight-day clock. That done, he closes the lid and fastens it, wraps it up again, takes it under his arm, leaves the room and the hotel, and once more wends his way down toward the dock where the Foscari lies moored. When near the dock he gives a signal—a low whistle—and a minute or two later a man dressed as a common sailor emerges from a dark corner and approaches him.

"Is that you, Luigui?" the first comer asks.

"Yes, signor," is the half-whispered reply.

"Here is the box. Take it on board and conceal it as deep down in the hold as you can, and then come to me for your reward. I will wait for you here."

The sailor took the box under his arm and crept on board the Foscari with it, and disappeared from view. A half hour later he came back and whispered:

"It is done, signor."

"Then follow me and I'll give you the gold I promised."

He turned and led the way along the street, followed by the seaman, till they reached the street which led back to the hotel before mentioned. There he entered and led the way up to the room from which the box that was placed on board the vessel had been taken. The sailor followed, and the door was locked behind them.

"Sit down, Luigui," said the other, and the sailor took off his hat and sat down on a soft-cushioned chair, whilst the other opened a trunk and took therefrom a small leather bag. Opening the bag he took out several rolls of gold coin, and laying them on the table, said in low tones to the other:

"Here it is—count it and see that it is all right."

The black eyes of the Italian sparkled as he saw the bright yellow coins as he opened each roll and counted them.

"It is all right, signor," said he, as he proceeded to gather up the pile of gold—one thousand dollars in all. "You have kept your word with me."

"Now, listen to me, Luigui, while I relate to you a story," said the other. "I am sure you will be interested in it, for it is about what happened to a countryman of yours two years ago in this port. One dark night two years ago myself and a friend were roaming about the city in quest of adventures. We saw two sailors a little the worse for drink, reeling along down a street which led to the water. They were Italians, for we both

knew enough of that tongue to recognize it when we heard it. They were quarreling in their half-drunken way. When they passed us we followed, thinking we would see a fight. When they reached the foot of the street they came to blows, and they struggled across the street to the dock, where one of them was hurled into the wa——"

"Diabolol!" hissed the sailor, springing to his feet and glaring at the speaker.

"Be still, Luigui," said the other very coolly, looking him full in the face. "Listen to the rest of the story—when the other sailor realized what he had done he reeled away and stopped under a gaslight to gather his wits. I and my friend saw and recognized the face of Lu——"

"Perdizione!" hissed the sailor in his mother tongue.

"We never forgot his face. When I saw you four days ago I was hunting for just such a man, and you are the man I took you to be. You accepted my offer and did my bidding. Here is the gold I promised you. My friend knows nothing about this affair of mine. If he sees you in this country he will have you arrested for the crime of two years ago. Take this gold and go back to your country to-morrow on the first steamer leaving this port, and never come to America again. If he should see you I could not save you. If you betray me you will perish, too. Do you understand the situation, Luigui?"

"Yes, signor."

"And you will leave port to-morrow?"

"Yes, signor."

"Very well, then you are safe. Don't go around drinking, or you'll be ruined, robbed maybe. You cannot blackmail me into giving you any more money, because I won't do it. I have another witness against you, you have none against me, and so if you betray my secret, you will only lose your life without hurting me. Do you understand that, Luigui?"

"Yes, signor."

"Then you may go. Let liquor alone and settle down to a quiet life in your own country, and forget that you had ever been in America, and you may do well. Good-by."

The seaman put away the last coin of his reward and started toward the door. On the threshold he paused and looked back at the man who had now the power to control him, his hand clutching nervously the handle of his sheath-knife. The other returned his gaze unflinchingly, with even a faint smile on his lips—and the seaman passed out. The other followed him downstairs and saw him leave the hotel, after which he returned to his room and locked himself in.

CHAPTER I.—Mark Howland, the Boy Fireman.

The great fire bell rang out on the night air, and thousands of people in Groveton stopped and listened.

"It is in the third district!"

People rushed out of their houses with blanched faces, and gazed eagerly in the direction they knew the fire to be. By and by a red glare is seen, and all eyes gaze upon it. Soon long, twisting tongues of flame shoot upward, and millions of sparks ascend and disappear in the darkness of the night.

"There goes No. 4 Hook and Ladder!" cried scores of people, as a long ladder truck dashed by on the way to the fire at a break-neck speed.

It was the first to get there, and the ladders were promptly handled by the brave fellows. An engine dashed up and soon had a stream pouring on the doomed building. The young foreman ordered the ladders up. Mark Howland, the young foreman of No. 4, sung out through his trumpet:

"Up, boys, and save the children!"

"All those not needed to man the engine and hose sprang for the ladders. The young foreman himself led the way, and was the first to enter the burning building—going in through a second-story window, where a mother and her young babe were so blinded by smoke, and confused by the noise and fear, that they did not know which way to move. He seized the mother in his strong arms and passed her out of the window to another fireman, who soon landed them safely on the ground below amid the cheers of the multitude of spectators. The other engines came up and quickly started streams of water going, but the building was of frame and like a tinder box. Mark appeared at the window a moment or two later, and passed out another child to a fireman. Then he placed the speaking trumpet to his lips and sung out to the other fire companies:

"The house is full of women and children! Come up and save them!"

The brave firemen dashed up the ladders and climbed through the windows in the face of flame and smoke, and rescued women and children at the risk of their own lives. By and by the flames became so fierce that it seemed as if the brave firemen themselves would be destroyed. A piercing scream in a woman's voice was heard, and Mark Howland sprang to the ladder again alone.

"Come back! Come back!" yelled all the firemen in a chorus; but he moved the ladder to the next window and ran up. Suddenly the form of a fireman appeared at the window, and looking Mark full in the face, motioned him back with one hand, whilst with the other he raised a fireman's trumpet to his lips.

Mark glared at the fireman with a feeling of amazement that can be better imagined than described. He recognized him as a specter whose face was strangely familiar. With a face ashen-hued he quickly descended the ladder, though the woman's screams for help were still ringing in his ears. At the foot of the ladder he hoarsely cried to the firemen:

"Back! Back for your lives! There is danger!"

The next moment the partition wall fell in, and the other firemen recoiled from the dangerous locality and watched the progress of the destruction they could not prevent. Midnight found the engines still sending streams of water on the great bed of coals, as it was believed that at least five persons had perished in the flames. The heroic efforts of young Howland, foreman of Hook and Ladder No. 4, to save life and property called forth commendation from everybody. The different companies returned to their headquarters, doffed their red shirts and hats, and proceeded to seek the rest many of them so much needed. Once more in his room, young Mark Howland, instead of immediately retiring, seated himself by the window and gazed out and up at the stars.

"It's the strangest thing I ever heard of," he

said to himself, as he sat there gazing out of the window of his room. "It was my father, for I saw him as plainly as I can see those stars up there now. His picture in that same uniform hangs up in the hall of old No. 6 in New York to-day. I've seen it many a time when old Joe McGrath used to take me there. He held the same old trumpet in one hand, and with the other waved me back, standing there like one bidding defiance to the flames. What does it mean? Why did he appear to me in that way and at that time? Was it to warn me of the danger that threatened, or does his spirit run to the fires as he did when alive? Oh, I wish I knew! What a brave-looking fireman he was. Of course he is dead, for ghosts of live persons are never seen. What was his fate? How did he die? He went out one night, and was never seen again. They looked for him everywhere, but all in vain. Everybody said he had been foully dealt with, and that his fate would remain one of the mysteries of the great city. That was—let me see—more than sixteen—yes, seventeen years ago. My mother was dead. He had a brother in business with him, who closed up the store, and after placing me with old Aunt Edith Warner, went away to parts unknown. He never sent her any money, and where he is goodness only knows.

Mark sat there in his chair a couple of hours, by which time he was composed enough to go to bed, and he did so. In a little while longer he was soundly sleeping and dreaming of his early childhood days, when he was a barefooted urchin running about the streets of the great city of New York. Old Aunt Edith Warner, the kind-hearted old widow who took charge of the motherless and fatherless child when his Uncle Henry went away from the city, apprenticed him to a machinist when he grew up to the age of fifteen years, and at the end of four years his boss died, and he was released from his apprenticeship, regarded as one of the best skilled workmen among the machinists of the city. He sought work and found it, but soon after he settled down to work as a regular machinist he received an offer to go to Groveton, a young and flourishing city not a thousand miles from New York. He accepted the offer, and moved out to Groveton and went to work.

A year after he settled in Groveton he suggested that the mechanics of the flourishing young city organize a hook and ladder company. The suggestion took, and in a little time No. 4 was added to the fire companies of Groveton, with Mark Howland as foreman. He soon became the most popular fireman in the department, on account of his genial manner, jolly temperament and daring exploits in battling with the flames. It was not till he had been to several fires that he saw the specter of his father in the flames, and that was when his life was in imminent peril from a falling wall.

CHAPTER II.—The Stranger.

The next morning after the fire the papers were filled with accounts of the daring deeds of the firemen—giving the almost unknown young foreman of No. 4 the credit of having saved more lives and ran greater risks than any other, besides being the first on the ground. Mark was hailed by the superintendent of the shop with:

"Hello, Mark, old boy. You made yourself famous last night."

"Well, I don't know about that," he replied, modestly, "but I do know that I came very near being roasted."

"Yes, a whole lot of you came very near getting licked up by the flames. Did you see that wall coming down when you warned the others out?"

"No. I felt that there was very great danger; that was all."

There were a number of poor families who lost everything they had in the fire, and No. 4 started a subscription for their benefit. Hundreds of grateful people sent in money to the secretary of the company, and in a few days a round sum was raised, which was turned over to the sufferers by the fire. A week later Mark Howland was going home from the machine shop, when he was accosted by an old man who seemed to be so poor as to be the next thing to a tramp.

"They say you are Mark Howland, the fireman," the old man said.

"Yes, that's my name," replied Mark, "and I am a fireman."

The old man looked him over from head to foot with a degree of interest that excited no little amusement in Mark's mind.

"They say you are the son of an old New York fireman, too," remarked the old man.

"Yes, my father was a fireman, but I have only a faint recollection of him. He had been dead many years."

"Yes, I knew him well. I was a member of old No. 6 myself when Mark Howland, your father, was foreman of it."

Mark grasped his hand and held it, looking the old man full in the face.

"You knew my father?" said he.

"Yes, I knew him well. He disappeared one night, and was never seen again. I remember how we all hunted for him everywhere, and hired detectives to keep up the search. But we never found him again."

"What is your name, sir," Mark asked, deeply interested in the old man.

"Ben Wright is my name, and your father and I were great friends when we ran with old No. 6."

"I have heard old Joe McGrath speak of you," said Mark, pressing the old man's hand again.

"Ah! Did you know Joe? He was a fine fellow—a fine fellow."

"He is a fine old man yet," said Mark.

"What—is he living yet?"

"Why, yes—at least he was a year ago when I saw him."

"Goodness gracious! I heard years ago that he was dead."

"Well, I saw and talked with him only a year ago, and he was a fine, hearty old man then. Where do you live, Mr. Wright?"

"I am stopping with a married niece down in Ellis street. I have been here but a few weeks. I am too poor to have a home of my own now, though I once had all that heart could wish. My wife died years ago, and my boy only a year later. That broke me all up, and I have been going down hill ever since. I may have to go to the poorhouse yet."

The old man was about to say something more to him, but Mark hurried away from him as if he had an engagement to meet elsewhere. But the old man was not left alone abruptly without

a motive. In his hand he felt a coin, and looking down beheld a bright new silver dollar which Mark had left there. Tears came into his eyes as he gazed at it in the gathering twilight.

The old man turned and bent his footsteps in the direction of the little street on which lived the married niece, with whom he had found a temporary home. Mark walked briskly forward toward his boarding house, for the old man had detained him beyond his supper hour.

"There are but few of the old firemen left," he muttered to himself as he hurried forward. "What a time they would have if he and old Joe McGrath could meet and talk over old times again. I'll write to old Joe this very night, and tell him about meeting Mr. Wright."

Full of that idea he entered the house, ran up to his room, and quickly washed off the stains of the shop, dressed himself, and went down to supper.

"You are late to-night, Mr. Howland," said the landlady—a jolly, good-natured widow with two marriageable daughters.

"Yes, ma'am. I met an old friend on the way home, and we had to take a little talk, you know."

"Why didn't you bring him to supper with you?" the widow asked.

"Oh, he is a very old man, and was on his way to supper himself. I may bring him to supper some other time."

The widow's daughter Jeannie, a bright, vivacious maiden of eighteen years, came and sat down near her mother.

She was dressed neatly and was really a pretty girl, but was so much given to flirtation that Mark had avoided her as much as he could without hurting her feelings or causing remarks by others. On this particular evening she had determined to make herself so agreeable to him that he could not refuse to act as her escort to a social party, where she was exceedingly anxious to parade him as another one of her conquests. While he was eating and talking with the mother and daughter the front door bell rang.

"Somebody to see Mr. Howland," said the servant girl, re-entering the dining-room.

Mark arose from the table and said to the girl:

"Show him into the parlor."

"He is a hard-looking case, sir," remarked the very matter-of-fact girl. "You had better see him at the door. I locked it as I came away."

He did not wait to hear more, but hastened upstairs and to the front door. There he found a very dark, bushy-bearded man, poorly dressed and not by any means very prepossessing in appearance, standing on the stoop, where the light from the hall lamp could fall upon him.

"You want to see me?" Mark asked.

"Yes, sir," answered the other, with a slight foreign accent, "if you are Mr. Howland."

"That is my name," returned Mark, as he stood there and looked at the man.

"I want to speak to you privately, if you please."

"What about? I have an engagement to-night."

Mark believed him to be a beggar who wanted to relate a story of want and suffering to draw money from his slender purse.

"I have something important to tell you, and if——"

"Well, out with it," said Mark, impatiently. "I am listening."

"No, no, not here," said the man, shaking his head and looking around.

"Well, come in, then," replied Mark, holding the door open for him to enter.

He entered and then Mark led the way up to his room. The man followed him quietly, and when Mark closed the door of his room he asked:

"Now, what is it?"

"Is your name Mark Howland?" the man asked.

"Yes, that's my name?"

"Your father bore the same name, too, did he not?"

"Yes, my mother called me after my father."

"What became of your father?"

Mark started again. He gazed at the stranger in silence for a minute or two, and then said:

"I know not. His fate is a dark mystery. He disappeared in New York one night, and was never seen again. Why do you ask me these questions?"

"Because I know your father's fate, young man. With me it is no mystery."

Mark staggered back against the bed, and almost gasped out:

"In God's name, tell me if he lives!" and then he sprang forward and grasped the man's arm and pushed him down into a chair.

CHAPTER III.—Mark Goes to New York for Points.

The dark face of the stranger put on an eager expression as he found himself pushed down on the chair by the young fireman, but in another moment he recovered his usual secretive cunning as he glanced at the pale face of the young man.

"Speak, man, and tell me if my father lives!" hissed Mark, as he clutched the stranger's arm in a vise-like grip.

"He does not live," said the man, very quietly.

"He has been dead a long time."

"How, when and where did my father die?"

"Do you know what became of your Uncle Henry?" the man asked.

"My Uncle Henry?"

"Yes, sir—your father's brother and partner in business."

"What has he to do with it?"

"Much. You can never know the mystery of your father's fate until you find your Uncle Henry."

"Why, I have not seen or heard of him for some seventeen years," said Mark, in no little surprise.

"But if he is alive and in this country he can be found, I guess," replied the man.

"But why is it necessary to find him? Does he know aught of my father's fate?"

"He knows that which would lead to the unraveling of the mystery."

"But do you know how my father died?" Mark asked, with emphasis.

"The knowledge that I have, combined with what your uncle possesses, will make everything clear to you."

"But can you tell me anything about it?"

"Not till I find your uncle," was the reply.

"Then why did you come to me?"

"To tell you this much."

"Why tell me this much and no more?"

"In order that you might find your uncle and learn all."

"Who are you?"

The man looked furtively at him for a moment or two, and then said:

"My name is Bensoni. I hope you won't try to learn more about me till you have tried your best to learn the whereabouts of your uncle. When you have found him let me know, and I shall go to him with you, tell all I know, and leave the rest with him."

Mark looked at the man, and saw that he was not to be moved from his purpose of saying no more on the subject. But he asked:

"Will you answer me one more question?"

"No; it would do no good. You must find your uncle."

"It may take months to find him," said Mark. "Where will you remain during that time?"

"Here in this town," was the reply.

"Have you any business?"

"Yes—I sell fruit and nuts."

"How long have you been here?"

"Three days. I saw your name in the papers, and came to see if you were the son of Mark Howland."

"Very well. Where shall I find you if I want to see you?"

"Down near the depot. I shall sell fruit there every day."

"Shall I call you Bensoni?"

"Yes," and the man nodded his head as he spoke.

"It's Italian, is it not?"

"Yes."

The man rose to his feet and looked toward the door. Mark opened the door and he passed out, going down the stairs to the front door, whither Mark followed him.

"I am in only of evenings," said Mark, in very low tones. "I am out all day."

Bensoni nodded his head, but did not make any reply, and the next moment he passed out to the street. Mark returned to his room and threw himself on his bed, where he gave way to a train of conflicting thoughts.

"What does it all mean?" he asked himself, as he lay there looking up at the window. "It is a greater mystery than ever. What does my Uncle Henry, if alive, know about it? How can I find him? Aunt Edith Warner said he went away, and none of his friends ever heard of him afterward. I must see and tell her of this, and then consult old Joe McGrath. Old Joe was one of father's best friends. He was never tired of talking to me about him, and when he spoke of my Uncle Henry to me, which he did sometimes, he would shake his head as if something worried him. How did this man Bensoni come to know my father and Uncle Henry?"

As may well be supposed, young Mark Howland did not sleep very much that night. He lay awake thinking over what he had heard. The next morning he went to work as usual, but did not feel quite like himself. He was in a deep study all day, trying to decide what was best for him to do. Before he quit work in the evening he told the superintendent of the shop that he would have to go to New York that night, and would not be back till Monday morning.

"What's the trouble?" the superintendent asked.

"I have some business which must be attended to," was the reply.

"We can ill afford to spare you even for one day, Mark."

"I know that, but I must go even if I lose my place."

"Oh, you shall not lose your place," said the other, who was an ardent friend of the young fireman.

"Thanks," returned Mark. "I'll lose only tomorrow, and will be on hand Monday."

It was on Friday evening that he took the train for New York, and after traveling all night, reached the city the next morning. He lost no time in paying a visit to the old engine room of No. 6 of the old Volunteer Fire Department to look at the old picture of his father, which he had so often seen when a little lad. He asked permission to enter and look at the picture. The fireman in charge, knowing who he was, having seen him when he came there on former occasions, greeted him kindly, and led the way into the room where the painting hung. Mark gazed up at the image of his father, and turned pale. Every feature of the specter he had seen in the flames was there—even to the expression of the eyes. He could no longer doubt that his father had appeared to him to save his life. But he said nothing to the old fireman who was standing by his side, save to thank him as he was leaving.

"I am not living in the city now," he said, "and when I come in I want to look at it."

"Yes, yes! Drop in every time you come to town," said the fireman, as he shook hands with him.

"Thanks, I will," returned Mark, as he hurried away to the home of old Joe McGrath.

He found the old fireman at home, confined to the house with a touch of rheumatism.

"Why, Mark, my boy," greeted the old man, reaching out his hand to him, "I am glad to see you! How like your father you are growing!"

Mark shook hands with the old man and sat down by him, saying

"I came in this morning, and ran up to old No. 6 to look at the picture. If I am growing to look like my father I shall be very proud."

"Well, you are and no mistake, my boy," said the old man. "It does my old eyes good to look at you. Ah; what a lad your father was! But there are few of the old boys left. Those who have not gone to the cemetery are not far away from it. Just look at me now. I am tied up with the rheumatiz, and can't get out of the house."

"I am very sorry to find you suffering this way," replied Mark. "I dropped in to tell you that I met old Ben Wright the other day."

"Old Ben Wright! Is he alive yet?"

"Yes, sir. He is out in Groveton with a married niece there, and he fears he'll have to go to the poor-house."

"Poor Ben," sighed the old man. "He lost his wife and son, and that broke him up completely. Well, well, I wish I could see him. He was a brave fireman, Ben was."

"He had heard that you were dead," said Mark, "and did not know any better till I told him. But I wanted to ask you something about my father's brother. Did you know him?"

"Who—Henry Howland?"

"Yes. My father never had but one brother, did he?"

"No; Henry was his only brother."

"Do you think he could be found?"

"Why, yes. Do you want to find him?"

"Yes, sir."

"What for?"

That was a question Mark had expected, and so he answered:

"I want to see him to ask him some questions about my parents. He is getting along in years now, and may die at any time."

"Well, I don't know how you could find him unless you hire a detective, and they are very expensive, as I know from experience."

"Who is the best detective for such a job?" Mark asked.

The old man looked at him.

"Are you going to hire one?" he asked.

"Perhaps I may."

"Well, the one we had seventeen years ago is still in the business. His name is Scott—here is his address," and the old man wrote it down on a card for the young fireman and gave it to him. "Tell him who you are and what you want, and maybe he'll be reasonable in his charges."

Mark took the card and looked at it. He knew the place well, and put the address in his pocket, to be used when wanted. Taking leave of old Joe McGrath, he went over to the other side of town to see Mrs. Edith Warner, the good old widow who had been as a mother to him. The dear old lady fell on his neck and welcomed him only as a loving mother could welcome a beloved son. He returned her affectionate greeting with a warmth that made her heart glad.

"How like your father you have grown," she said, as she surveyed him from head to foot.

Mark laughed, and throwing his hat on a table, sat down to chat with the old lady.

CHAPTER IV.—The Old Detective.

Mark spent an hour with old Aunt Edith Warner ere he mentioned to her the object of his visit to New York. Then he asked her if she had any idea what had become of his Uncle Henry. She looked at him in surprise, and answered:

"No, child, I don't, if he's alive. If he is dead he's gone to the Old Harry, sure."

Mark smiled. The old lady always declared to him that Henry Howland would go to everlasting punishment when he died.

"You were his only brother's child," she said, "and he should have provided for you instead of going away to get rid of you, as I believe he did."

"I want to see him. He must be getting old now."

"I'd like to see him just once myself," she remarked, "and tell him what I think of him."

"Well, I promise you that if I ever find him I'll take you to see him."

"Then I hope you will find him," she said, her eyes snapping, for good and motherly as she was, she was full of spirit when resenting a wrong or injustice.

Mark told her that he would return to take supper with her and occupy his old room, and then left to consult the old detective who had conducted the search for his father seventeen

years before. Scott did not recognize him at first till Mark added:

"I am the son of Mark Howland, whose mysterious taking off seventeen years ago you tried to unravel."

"Ah, yes—the fireman whose disappearance was never accounted for," remarked the old detective.

"Yes. I have called to see you about that same affair."

"What! Are you still hoping to find him?"

"No, sir. I am fully persuaded now that he is dead. It's my uncle—his brother—whom I wish to find now. Henry Howland. Do you remember him?"

"Oh, yes, very well indeed. Has he mysteriously disappeared, too?"

"He went away shortly after the search for my father was abandoned, and I've never seen or heard from him since."

"Have you advertised for him?"

"No, sir."

"What is the reason you have not?"

"Because I don't want him to know that anyone is looking for him."

"Why not?"

"Because I have reason to believe that he would try to prevent his identity from being discovered."

"Ah!" and the cold gray eyes of the old detective snapped as he glared at the young fireman.

"Can you find him for me?" Mark asked.

"Yes, if he is anywhere around, but it might cost you some money, young man."

"Of course it will, but you must tell me just how much it will cost, so I can see whether I am able to afford it or not."

"It is expensive business, young man. If there is any traveling to be done the railroad and hotel fares would knock twenty dollars a day out of you."

"Then I can't afford it," said Mark, very promptly.

"Well, I'll see what I can do for you," and the old detective took out his memoranda and wrote therein:

"Wanted—address of Henry Howland, who left New York seventeen years ago."

"Now, give me your address, young man," he said.

"Mark Howland, Groveton, N. Y."

That was the end of his business with Scott, and he rose to leave.

"I'll write you if I learn anything," said the old man, as he shook hands with him.

"Thanks, sir," and Mark went away feeling very much discouraged.

On returning to old Aunt Edith's humble abode he made a liberal purchase of groceries, and ordered them sent up to her. During the evening he asked her if she believed she would know Henry Howland were she to meet him after so many years of absence.

"Yes," she said. "I'd know him in any part of the world. Do you expect to find him, child?"

"Yes, Aunt Edith; if he is yet living, I think I'll find him."

They said no more about it that evening, preferring to talk of old times and old friends. At a late hour Mark retired to bed, where he slept soundly till the next morning. That being Sun-

day, he spent it visiting old acquaintances, and in the evening he took leave of Aunt Edith and set out to return to Groveton. He traveled all night, reaching his home in the morning in time to get a little breakfast before going to his work. He worked hard all day, and when the time came to strike off he was only too glad to do so.

"Have you heard the news, Mark?" one of his friends asked him as he was going home to supper.

"No. What is it?"

"All the hands in Dennison's shop have struck."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. The last one of them is out vowing vengeance against old Dennison."

"Well, I don't blame them. He has the name of being a hard man."

"Yes, and he is a hard one, too. He pays less for the same work than any other man in the business."

Just then a hatless old man, with terror depicted on his blanched face, came running toward him. A dozen men were following him, crying out angrily:

"Kill the old Shylock! Throw him into the river! He has grown rich on our labor!"

"Save me!" gasped the old man, clutching Mark's arm. "They want to kill me!"

"Why, Mr. Dennison," exclaimed Mark, "is it you?"

"Yes! They seek my life! Don't let them hurt me!"

"Kill him! Kill him!" cried his pursuers, coming up and making very threatening demonstrations toward him.

"Hold on now, boys!" cried Mark. "This is cowardly. A dozen against one old man. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves!"

"Do you know who he is?" they cried.

"Yes—he is Mr. Dennison."

"The meanest man in Groveton!" cried the others. "He would have us work for nothing."

"He is a hard man, I know," said Mark, "but he shall have a fair show for his life. The man among you who strikes him now strikes me. Now, who strikes the first blow?"

The angry mechanics growled and looked daggers at the brave young machinist, but none of them dared to strike.

"If you want justice," said Mark, "show it to others, and don't crowd an old man who can't defend himself. I am a mechanic myself, but I believe in fair play for everybody."

CHAPTER V.—Dennison, the Mean Man.

The angry workingmen were made ashamed of themselves, and went away so as not to be known as having let their anger get the better of them.

"You are all right now, sir," said Mark, turning to the trembling old man. "They have gone away."

"Young man, I—I—er—don't know what to say to you," stammered the old man. "You have—ah—done me a great service, sir, and if I can be of any service to you—why—er call on me—you know me."

"Yes, sir; you are Mr. Dennison," returned Mark. "I know you well. You have 300 men working for you, every one of whom hate you—"

and for reasons well known to you. I work for a man who works about half the number you do, but every man of them is his friend. We would fight for him because he is our friend. He pays us living wages, which you do not. There is the trouble. Pay your men living wages, and they'll be your friends, and——"

"Who are you, young man, who thus dares to talk to me in such language?"

"My name is Mark Howland, sir, and I work in the shops of Welsh & Co. A little plain truth won't hurt you in the least, and——"

Mr. Dennison straightened himself to his full height, glared at the young man in the gathering twilight, and then stalked away without uttering another word. Mark gazed after him till he disappeared around a corner, and then said:

"Well, he heard a little plain truth, anyhow."

"Yes," said a voice behind him, "but it won't do him any good. He has no sense of justice whatever as against a poor man who asks for living wages. But for you they would have torn him to pieces or thrown him into the river."

"Ah, well, you would have regretted it had you fellows done him any harm. I am with you in your strike, but not in your violence."

Mark went on his way home and told the boarders about the attack on Mr. Dennison. They were all against the rich manufacturer because of his hard usage of his employees, and not one expressed a word of sympathy for him. After supper Mark paid a visit to headquarters of No. 4 hook and ladder, and was talking with a number of the boys, when the great fire bell rang out an alarm. Every man sprang to his post, and in less than half a minute the long truck was out of its quarters and rushing like a whirlwind through the street. Mark was in advance, trumpet in hand, leading the way at the top of his speed. In the distance the red glare of the conflagration could be seen. Suddenly Mark beheld the Phantom Fireman just ahead of him, beckoning him on. He looked brave and gallant, and Mark tried hard to catch up with him, but he kept just a little in advance till they reached the fire—ahead of all the others.

"Up with the ladder!" cried Mark through the trumpet, and in a moment the brave boys were raising one to the third-story window.

Mark looked around for the Phantom Fireman, but he had vanished. Up the ladder dashed Howland, followed by a half dozen of his brave fellows. Into the room through the window they poured, almost tumbling over each other. Mark found a young lady on the floor, helpless and speechless from terror. He snatched her up and ran down the ladder with her, and gave her to friends.

"My child! Save my child!" screamed a mother, and Mark flew up the ladder again. They searched everywhere for the child, but did not find her.

At last they struck a room in which the flames defied them. Suddenly Mark darted back, crying out:

"Back! Get out, for your lives!"

They made a dash for the windows, and barely had time to get out on the ladders when the floor of the room overhead came down—a mass of red-hot coals. A cry of horror went up from the people on the street, for they believed that some of the brave firemen had been caught in the trap.

Others believed that the missing child was lost in the fire, and they, too, uttered exclamations of horror. But the firemen all escaped, and a few minutes later the child supposed to be lost was found at a neighbor's house, having been one of the first to escape from the burning building.

Mark was everywhere, doing all he could to save life and property. But the brick walls only were left standing, the rest of the house proving a total loss. When the firemen returned to their quarters they had nothing to talk about but the wonderful presence of mind of Mark Howland, whose warning had saved the others with him in the building. They little dreamed that he had been himself warned by the Phantom Fireman—the specter of his father, who appeared in the middle of the room he and his companions were trying to enter, and waved him back. Mark was serious. It was the second time he had seen the phantom, and it made an impression on his mind which he could not shake off.

The next day the papers were full of the exploits of the young fireman. He was credited with having saved the life of Sadie Wicherly, the richest young lady in Groveton; also with having rescued Mr. Dennison, the rich manufacturer, from the hands of an angry mob of his employees. Mark did not see the papers till he reached the shop, when one of his fellow workmen handed him one.

"Why didn't you let 'em handle old Dennison?" one of the men asked. "He is the meanest man in Groveton."

"What! Let a dozen young fellows ill-treat an old man?"

"But the old villain deserved all they could give him."

"Maybe he did. If you and I got what we really deserve what would become of us? Let every man have a fair show. It was not a fair show for him. I did not know who he was at first, but it would have made no difference if I had. A dozen on one is just eleven too many."

They went to work, and at noon, during their dinner hour, while they were still talking of Dennison and the strike on his hands, a boy brought a note to Mark, which he opened and read:

"Mr. Dennison desires to see Mr. Mark Howland at his office at his earliest convenience."

"Who gave you this?" Mark asked of the boy who brought the note to him.

"Mr. Dennison," replied the boy.

"Well, tell him I'll be there when I quit work at six o'clock."

The boy went away, and Mark placed the note in his pocket.

That evening Mark left the shop when six o'clock came, and made his way toward the office of old Dennison, a half mile out of his way. When he reached there he found a light in the office, and on opening the door was greeted by the old man himself with: "Come in—shut the door." Mark shut the door and then turned again to confront him.

"Take a seat, Mr. Howland," said Dennison. "I wanted to see you and find out if I could do anything for you in return for the service you did me last night."

"I don't think you can do anything for me, Mr. Dennison," said Mark. "I am doing very

well where I am—earning good wages and have steady work.”

“At least tell me something about yourself. I want to know you after what has happened. You are not a native of Groveton, are you?”

“No, sir, I was born in New York.”

“Does your father live there?”

“My parents are both dead. My father disappeared seventeen years ago in New York, and was never seen again.”

“Indeed! That’s strange.”

“Yes, sir—very strange.”

“Did they try to find him?”

“Yes, sir, but could not. I have lost all hope of that.”

“Well, you are a brave young man. If you ever want a friend or help of any kind, come to me.”

Mark thanked him and bowed himself out of the office. He turned in the direction of the headquarters of No. 4 Hook and Ladder, when he felt a stunning blow on the head behind that sent him reeling to the earth. The next moment he lost consciousness and all was darkness.

When Mark came to he found he was in a bag carried by two men. He was thrown into the water, but was enabled to break his bonds and also cut the bag open, when he floated to the top of the water. He did not know where he was, but found out he could easily gain the shore, which he did and lay down on the sandy beach.

He thought it must have been the strikers who attacked him. As soon as it was light he saw a farmhouse in the distance and made his way toward it to see if he could get a breakfast. Upon knocking on the door, a farmer came out and asked who he was and what he wanted. Mark answered his questions and told him his experiences of the night before.

The farmer was astonished and told his eldest daughter, Sarah, to prepare a breakfast for him. At the breakfast table he asked the farmer where the nearest doctor lived. The farmer told him.

Then Mark asked if he could stay there until he was dry. The farmer told him he could, and as he was afraid Mark was going to be sick he sent his son for the doctor.

The physician came and dressed his wound, after which they put him to bed. A fever set in and shortly he was out of his head. Sarah Bartlett, the daughter, waited on him like a guardian angel.

CHAPTER VI.—Mr. Dennison, the Rich Man.

In the morning when Mark Howland did not come down to breakfast at the usual hour, his landlady sent one of her children upstairs to tell him that his breakfast was ready. The child came back and said that the young man was not in his room.

“What!” exclaimed the landlady. “He has not gone out, for the front door has not been opened this morning.”

She ran upstairs to see for herself. A cursory glance around the room told her that Mark had not spent the night there at all, but with some friends of his, probably. She went back downstairs and attended to her duties, thinking that perhaps he would drop in for his breakfast before going to the shop. But he did not

turn up, and she said to herself that he would come home to dinner. At dinner time word came from the superintendent of the shop that he was wanted.

“He is not here,” said the landlady. “He did not come home at all last night.”

The messenger then sought some members of the fire company to make inquiries, only to find that they knew nothing of him either. When he reported to the superintendent, the latter said:

“He was to meet Mr. Dennison at his office after leaving off work last evening. Run over there and see what you can find out.”

The lad went and found the rich manufacturer at his office.

“Did Mark Howland come here last night, sir?” he asked.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Dennison, looking over his glasses at the lad. “He was here for a half hour or so.”

“Where did he go when he left here?”

“That is more than I can say. I wanted to give him a reward for a favor he had done for me, but he would not take anything. He went away in a good humor. Has anything happened to him?”

“I dunno, sir. He hasn’t turned up since,” replied the lad.

“Why, bless my soul! It can’t be that those strikers have done him any harm simply because he befriended me!”

The lad said nothing, but turned away and left the office. Late in the evening it was known all through the shops that Mark had mysteriously disappeared, and all sorts of rumors began to fly about. Two strikers who had been set to watch the office of Dennison said that they saw Mark leave the office, and walk down the street toward the engine house of No. 4, and that he disappeared around the corner. That was the last account they could get of him. Detectives were set at work at once by the firemen, and Mr. Dennison gave it as his opinion that he had been made way with by the strikers, because of the service he had rendered him when he was attacked by them. The strikers hooted at the idea, and so the matter stood at the end of the second day. On the morning of the third day Bensoni, the Italian fruit peddler, who had a stand down by the depot, heard that young Howland was missing and could not be found. He became very much excited, and run up the street to see what he could find out about it. People were astonished at the interest he took in the case, and some of them asked him why he was so much concerned.

“I knew him in New York,” he replied, with his Italian accent very plainly betrayed. “He was one leetle boy then.”

“Oh, yes—I see. You knew him when he was a small boy.”

“Yes—yes.”

That was satisfactory to the friends of the young fireman, and they liked the man for his friendship for Mark. The excitement was growing so great that Mr. Dennison was on the point of offering a reward for information concerning him.

“Wait one more day,” suggested the mayor,

"and if nothing is heard from him I'll proclaim the reward you offer."

"Very well. I think a great deal of the young man, and owe him a debt of gratitude. If he wishes to start in business for himself I am ready to back him with all the capital he needs."

Another day passed, and the mayor was on the point of issuing a proclamation offering a large reward for information of the whereabouts of Mark Howland, when an old farmer entered his office and asked:

"Be the mayor in?"

"Yes; I am the mayor," he answered. "What can I do for you?"

"Thar's er young man out to my place as says his name is Howler, or something like it. He says somebody, knocked him on the head and throwed him in the river. He came down by my place, an' thar he is in bed an' outen his head."

"That's Mark Howland!" cried the mayor, springing to his feet.

Just then Mr. Dennison opened the door and walked in.

"The reward is not wanted, Mr. Dennison," said the mayor. "Mark Howland has been found."

"Eh! What!" gasped Dennison, clutching the back of a chair and looking terribly excited. "Where is he? Is he alive?"

"Yes, but very ill out at this man's house, somewhere in the country. He was knocked down and thrown into the river for dead."

Mr. Dennison turned ashen-hued in the face and sank down into a chair. The mayor hastily filled a glass of water and handed it to him, saying:

"Here, drink this. You will feel better. The excitement is too much for you."

Dennison took the glass and swallowed its contents at a single gulp. But he was limp as a wet rag and seemed to be all broke up.

"It was a narrow escape," he said, in a hoarse whisper to the mayor.

"Yes, very, indeed, I think we shall have to offer a reward for the perpetrators of this outrage, Mr. Dennison. It is the most daring crime ever committed in Groveton."

"Yes, it's awful. I'm shocked beyond measure. If they will so treat the man who defended me, what won't they do to me?"

"I can have an officer detailed to watch over your personal safety," said the mayor, "if you think your life is in danger."

"It is in danger, Mr. Mayor," said the rich man.

"Then I'll see that you shall have the protection of the police," the mayor said.

He sent a city physician back with Mr. Bartley, the farmer, to identify Mark and give him the attention he needed. An officer was then sent for and detailed to watch Mr. Dennison and see that no attack was made upon him, by the strikers or anyone else. The rich man then took another drink of water and left the mayor's office, followed by the officer who had been detailed to watch over him. He was hooted at by the strikers as he made his way back to the office, but he paid no attention to them. Straight to his office he went, and shut himself in, telling the officer to wait outside for him. Half an hour later he came out of the office,

having recovered his equanimity apparently, and started for his home. The officer followed behind him at a respectful distance to see that no one of the strikers interfered with him.

It was the physician who recognized his patient as Mark Howland. Several firemen came to the farmhouse to see Mark. The Italian fruit pedlar, Bensoni, also came to see him. At last Mark came to himself and saw the farmer's daughter bending over him. He asked how long he had been sick and she answered:

"Ten days."

Two days later Mark was taken in a carriage to Groveton and placed in bed.

The next morning Mr. Dennison was one of the first to visit him. Mark looked beyond him as he held his hand and saw the Phantom Fireman standing at the foot of the bed. He sprang up to a sitting posture and Mr. Dennison wheeled and looked to see what he was staring at, and then left the room, his face like that of a dead man.

CHAPTER VII.—The Young Fireman Recovers.

When Mr. Dennison left the room in such haste Mark saw that he was very pale, but was himself so much agitated that he did not take any particular notice of the fact. But the fact that the Phantom Fireman had appeared to him in his bedroom was of more interest to him than anything connected with the rich manufacturer who had just left him. He sat up in bed and glared at the spot where the Phantom had stood and tried to convince himself that he had been dreaming. But he could not do so. He was painfully conscious that he was not asleep, but wide awake. Falling back on the bed, he asked himself:

"What does it mean now—what danger threatens me? Was it a warning of danger, like the other two appearances? Where is the danger? He shook his head at Mr. Dennison. Is he dangerous to me? Ah, I understand now. If I have anything to do with him my life will be in danger from the strikers. Oh, yes, that's plain now. Well, I won't have anything to do with him—at least as long as the strike is on. What a singular thing it is that he should appear right here in my room that way. Strange my mother does not appear with him, for she must have loved me as much as my father did."

He would have communed with himself much more had not his other friends come to see him. They found him very pale and weak, and did not stay long, and in a little while he was alone again. Then he gave the landlady orders not to let any more visitors come up that night. He wanted to be alone and think—for he was too much excited to think. He tried to frame a theory on which he could base a cause for the cowardly attack which had been made upon him, but try hard as he would, he could not come to any other conclusion but that some of the angry strikers did it.

"Did Mr. Dennison see the Phantom, I wonder?"

That query came into his mind, and then he recollected that the rich man looked around to the foot of the bed, turned pale, and left the

room in great haste. If he did see it he'll mention it to me some day, if I give him a chance to do so.

He finally slept, and did not wake up till a gentle tap on his room door told him that the servant girl was bringing him up his regulation breakfast.

"How do you feel this morning?" the girl asked as she placed the tray on a table by the bedside.

"I am much better. I'll soon save you the trouble of bringing my meals up by coming downstairs."

"Oh, it's no trouble at all," she replied. "I don't mind it the least bit. The greatest trouble is running to the door every few minutes to tell your friends that you can't be seen. You've got more friends than any man I ever heard of."

"Can't you manage to pick out a beau among them?" he asked.

She looked at him and laughed.

"Oh, now I know you are much better," she said. "You are beginning to talk like your old self again."

She arranged his breakfast for him, and he ate what he wanted while she waited for the dishes.

"That ugly-looking old Italian came last night to inquire about you," said the girl, after a pause.

"I told him you were doing well, but that you could not be seen then. What shall I tell him when he calls again?"

"Show him up here if nobody else is in the room. He is a good friend of mine."

"He's a queer friend for a young man like you to have," remarked the girl.

"He knew my father."

"Oh, that's a difference," she said, taking the dishes and tray away.

Several days passed, during which Mark made rapid progress toward recovery. His friends came and went with regularity, congratulating him on his daily improvement. They promised him a public reception at the headquarters of No. 4 as soon as he was able to get out.

One evening the old Italian was shown up by the girl.

"I am glad to see you, Bensoni. I have had a hard time of it."

"Yes—very hard time, but you will get well again," said the fruit vender.

"Oh, yes. I'll be out in a few days."

"Do you think you can find him?" Bensoni asked in low tones.

"Yes—we'll find him," replied Mark. "Are you getting along all right?"

"Yes—all right," and then he took leave of the young fireman and left the house as quietly as he could.

"He is a strange old man," thought Mark, as he listened to his footsteps as he went down the stairs.

"He has a secret which the presence of my Uncle Henry alone can draw out of him. If Uncle Henry is dead, or cannot be found, I fear I'll never be able to get the secret out of him."

A few days later Mark was able to go out of the house, but he was far from strong. He could go but a few blocks away the first day, and then return. But everywhere he went he was greeted with cordiality and congratulated on

having pulled through his trouble. The news that Dennison's men had gone back to work again did him more good than all the medicine he had taken.

"That removes a threatened danger," he said to himself, as he sauntered back home. "Ah! Here comes Mr. Dennison now. I congratulate him on the cessation of the trouble with his workmen."

"Ah! How do you do, Mr. Howland?" greeted Mr. Dennison as they met. "I am glad to see you out again."

"Thanks, sir, I am very glad to be out. Allow me to thank you for the kindness, and congratulate you on the ending of the strike. I am glad the matter has been settled so amicably."

"Thank you. I am very glad of it myself. It looked very serious for a time."

"Those strikes are very serious things to workmen. I am very much opposed to them."

"So are all sensible men." Do you feel strong enough for a ride to-morrow evening? My carriage is at your service at any time."

"I am grateful to you, sir, but people will talk about it if I do, and so I would rather not do it."

"I don't know but what you are right. Still, I would like in some way to contribute something to your comfort. Your sickness has put you to some expense. As I was the innocent cause, perhaps, of the attack on you, I would be glad if you would allow me to pay your physician's bill."

"Thanks, sir, but I prefer to pay that myself. I am quite sure that I shall some day get at the cowardly rascals, and if I do, and any of them are your men who were on strike at that time, you can come in and help me in sending them to prison."

Mr. Dennison passed on, and Mark reached his room quite fatigued from the walk he had taken. As he sat in his easy chair near the window he saw the gentle old house cat trying to get at the water in the pitcher which stood in the wash basin.

"You want a drink of water, do you, Tom?" Well, you shall have it," and he took a saucer off the mantel, and filling it with water, he placed it on the floor for the cat to drink. The feline lapped up about half the water in the saucer and then left it.

"I'd join you, Tom," said Mark, "only I prefer some fresh water. But what's the matter with you?"

The cat began to act strangely, as if in distress. It rolled on the carpet, mewed, and then seemed to have convulsions. Mark watched it for some time, and saw the pet of the household stretch itself out on the carpet and die.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Secret Foe.

Mark took up the cat, and ascertained that it was dead. Then he laid it down on a chair, and locked the door of the room.

"There was poison in that water," he said, his face white as a sheet. "It was intended for me, and the poor cat saved my life by drinking some of it first. Somebody is seeking my life.

Who can it be, and what have I done that anyone should seek to poison me? Can it be that the same parties who threw me into the river are engaged in this attempt? My goodness! What have I done? Whom have I harmed that they should thus seek to destroy me? What is the best to be done now? Shall I let this be known, or is it best to keep it concealed and watch for the villains? I'll hide the cat under the bed till night, and then throw it out of the window. The water I'll pour into the slop bucket, and have the girl bring up some fresh from the well."

He concealed the cat, emptied the pitcher and saucer, and then went downstairs to ask for fresh water. The girl took the pitcher and started to the well.

"Will you please rinse the pitcher well for me?" Mark asked.

"Yes," she said, and she did so.

He received the pitcher full of water and carried it up to his room. A few minutes later he heard the landlady pass his door, and called to her.

"Did anyone call for me while I was out to-day?"

"Yes, several gentlemen called, but they were told that you were not in, and they went away."

"Did no one come up here?"

"Not that I know of. I'll ask the girl and find out."

The girl, in response to the inquiry, said that nobody had gone up to the room. But Mark was sure that someone had been there, though he said nothing about it. He waited till night came, and then hurled the dead cat as far out of the window as he could throw it. Then he lit his lamp and sat down in an easy chair to receive such of his friends as called to see him.

"You look very pale to-night, old boy," said one of the members of No. 1. "You probably walked too far to-day."

"Maybe I did. I feel quite tired and shall retire early to-night."

His friends soon retired, in order that he might do so, too, and in a little while he was alone. He took more care in fastening the door and windows to his room than ever before in his life, and then when he retired, he did not sleep for a long time. The fact of an unknown enemy seeking one's life by stealth is calculated to disturb the slumber of the most stout-hearted of mankind. It is a warfare that even the bravest of men, and Mark Howland was no exception to the rule. His sleep that night was not of a refreshing character, and when he awoke in the morning he was not feeling and looking as well as his friends had the right to expect. He went down to breakfast, and the first thing he heard was the statement that the house cat had been found out in the middle of the street dead.

He made no remarks concerning the fate of the cat, but ate his breakfast in silence. Not being able to do anything else for the greater part of the day, reading or trying to reason out the mystery of the attempt on his life. That day Mr. Bartley, the farmer of whose house he had been so tenderly treated, called to see him.

"I'm really glad to see you up and about," said the farmer, as he shook his hand. "My daughter Sarah is out there in the wagon, and—"

"Bring her up, Mr. Bartley," he said, quickly. "I want to see her above everyone else."

The farmer went out and assisted his daughter out of the wagon and led her into the house, where Mark received her in the sitting room.

"Miss Sarah, I am glad to see you," he said, taking both her hands. "I owe you a debt of gratitude which could not be paid in a lifetime."

She blushed and stammered out her congratulations on his recovery. The visit was a short one, and she left with a promise from him to call and see her as soon as he was able to do so. At the end of another week, the firemen gave him a reception at a large hall, and all the firemen in the town turned out to shake his hand and dance with the girls. Strange to say, there were no rivalries among the firemen of Groveton save those of a laudable character. The members of other companies were as proud of the daring achievements of Mark Howland as they would have been one of their own members. Among those who sent congratulations was Mr. Dennison, who wrote him a note full of kind wishes, signing his name as "your friend till death, James Dennison."

Coming from the richest man in the town, Mark prized the note very kindly, and resolved to keep it as one of the pleasant memories of his career as a fireman. But Mark was never off his guard after the fate of the cat had told him of his danger. He would neither eat nor drink anything offered him at the reception, though he suffered somewhat from thirst. And when he went to his room he would only drink the water which he drew from the well himself before retiring. To be thus in constant fear of one's life is one of the most miserable situations one can be subjected to, and Mark Howland was no exception to the rule. Yet he would take no one into his confidence and tell the story of the poisoning of the water in his room. He preferred to let the would-be poisoner believe that he had not found it out, and keep a strict watch for him in the future.

A few days after the reception given in his honor by the firemen Mark went to work at his bench in the Groveton Iron Works again. He felt fully restored to health, but was no longer the light-hearted fellow he was before he had seen the Phantom Fireman. He was now a stern but quiet young man, and his friends believed that the close call he had had was the cause of the change. A week later he was going home from the shop when it was quite dark. A heavy black cloud overhead made it darker still. He was hastening forward over the usual route when he suddenly became aware that someone was in his path. Looking up, he was dumfounded at seeing the Phantom Fireman directly in his path. The unexpected meeting caused him to halt and start back. The next moment the Phantom pointed to the right and then vanished.

"That means that I should go that way," said Mark to himself, "and I am going that way."

He turned off squarely to the right and started down the little cross street as fast as he could walk, and had not gone half a block when he heard a cry and a groan back, and up above, where he turned off. A moment or two later he heard someone running in his direction, and

he wheeled round to see who it was. Scarcely had he done so ere he was run into by a man somewhat taller than himself.

"I—I beg your pardon," stammered the man, and the next moment the man dashed away at the top of his speed, and disappeared in the darkness of the night.

Mark returned to his boarding house, to learn that a man had been found unconscious from a stab wound three blocks below the boarding house. Then he realized why it was that the Phantom Fireman had warned him to go the other way. The Phantom had saved his life. Later he learned that the wounded man was Jack Willoughby, whom he knew well. He made up his mind that as soon as he could he would hire a detective to hunt up his uncle.

Mark resolved to call on Old Ben Wright, and went to his house. But his niece informed Mark that Old Ben had gone to New York to enter the Home for Old Firemen, as an old friend had given him an annuity for life.

"Who was the friend?" asked Mark.

"Mr. Dennison," she answered.

CHAPTER IX.—A Surprise for Mark.

Had old Ben Wright's niece told him that her uncle had grown a pair of wings with which he flew away, Mark Howland would not have been more surprised than he was when she said that old Dennison had pensioned him and assisted him to a good home for old men in New York. He knew that the rich manufacturer was well able to do all that, and more, that he did do it was a fact very difficult for him to believe.

"Do you mean to tell me that Mr. Dennison has given him money and secured him a home for life in a home in New York?" he asked the lady of the house.

"Yes, sir—at least that is what Uncle Ben told me," she replied, "and I guess it's true, for Uncle Ben is a truthful man. He had no money, and yet he got two suits of good clothes and had money when he left here. Mr. Dennison came to see him twice when he was here."

"Well, well," said Mark. "Something is going to happen. It would be very hard to make anybody in Groveton believe that he would do so much for anybody in Groveton."

"Yes, sir—that's true. I had always heard that Dennison was a kind, merciful kind of a man, but I can believe that no longer."

"No, of course not. Now can you tell me why he did not come and tell me he was going away?"

"Yes—of course. Well, well! It's all strange to me. Do you mind if I ask Mr. Dennison the old man?"

"I can tell you that I told you I didn't know," she replied.

"I can tell you that I heard about it," said Howland.

"I can tell you you are not at liberty to tell me. I think that if you will wait a week or two longer Mr. Ben will write to us, and you can have the address."

"Yes, that's so. I'll wait and see if he will write."

"I'll let you know as soon as we hear from him, for he did think so much of you."

He left the house and strolled off up the street toward the headquarters of No. 4 Fire Company.

Mark dropped in at the fire company's quarters and spent an hour there talking to the boys, and while there an alarm of fire was heard. Instantly every man was at his post—so quickly, in fact, that they were out of the building ere the last stroke of the big bell had struck. The fire was in another tenement house, and many lives were in peril. No. 4 Hook and Ladder was the first to reach the fire, and two lives had been saved ere a stream of water was started. Mark was in his element now. He rushed in and rescued women and children till the heat from the fierce flames drove all the firemen back. And yet it was known that women and children were still in the building. Their cries for help could still be heard. Mark listened for a moment or two then darted forward.

"Back—back! Come back, Mark!" yelled nearly every fireman on the ground.

But Mark believed that the Phantom Fireman would help him to get out alive, and so did not hesitate when he heard his comrades calling to him. Into the fiery furnace he plunged and disappeared from sight. Everything was ablaze. The fierce flames were licking up everything combustible. Through one room into another he dashed, hardly daring to breathe or open his eyes. A third room was reached, and then he found the heat intolerable. He turned to retreat, but the fire blocked his way, and he turned to another door, which was all ablaze. Throwing himself against it with all his might, he burst it open and staggered into another room. Half way across the room he stumbled over a child—a little two-year-old-girl—lying on the floor unconscious. He snatched her up and hugged it to his heart, whilst he made a dash toward a door at the further side of the room. But he discovered that in the next room the flooring had given way, rendering exit by that route an utter impossibility.

"What shall I do? Where is my father?"

The words burst from his lips involuntarily, for he was in despair of his life, and he knew not which way to turn. Suddenly his eyes beheld a door on his left. Beyond was a flight of stairs. As a last hope he sprang up the steps, still clasping the unconscious child to his heart. Up, up he climbed till he struck another door. That one was burning like a piece of tinder, but he plunged through only to find himself at the foot of another flight. Up, up another flight he dashed, and then he found a hall in which he was alone. He ran to the door on his right, but he ran against another door, broke it open with a kick, and found himself in a narrow stairs somewhat like a step-ladder till his head struck a ceiling.

The ceiling gave way—he thought—and he pushed up against it to find himself going through the scuttle on the roof. It was then he caught the first breath of air since he entered the building. But he was so overcome that he fell on the roof and the little child rolled out

of his arms. He lay there some two or three minutes, and then came to himself. Snatching up the child, which was still unconscious, he dashed away over the roofs of the other tenement houses to the further end of the block.

There he sat down and looked at the child.

"It will soon die if it does not come to soon," he muttered, and then he looked around to see where he was. A scuttle on the roof he was then on was within a few feet of him. He ran to it and tried to open it. The fastening was very weak and soon gave way. To dash down into the house below was the work of but a few moments. On the first landing he saw a woman who was very much frightened at sight of him.

"Water—madam—water!" he cried. "This child must have water, or it may die!"

"Here—here is water!" she replied, opening a door and darting within. He followed, and met her with a cup of water in her hand.

He snatched the cup from her hand and dashed its contents into the child's face. Then he shook the child, blew in its face, and dashed more water all over it. In a little while the child uttered a low moan, and Mark's heart was touched to the deepest depths of sympathy.

"Give me the child," said the woman, who was herself a mother. Mark let her take it, and in a few minutes she had the child crying.

"Thank goodness!" he said. "That sounds like a healthy cry. Is the child burned anywhere?"

"I don't think she is," replied the woman, "as her clothes are not burned anywhere. But your hair is all burnt off below your hat rim, and your eyebrows, too!"

Mark put his hands to his head and found that she had told the truth. All the hair exposed under the rim of his hat had been burned away; even his eyebrows had suffered. He had, indeed, been through the fire.

CHAPTER X.—The Fireman and the Child.

When young Howland dashed into the burning building against the protests of all the firemen, an expression of horror might have been seen on the faces of hundreds of people who saw him disappear into the fiery furnace. As minute after minute passed and nothing more was seen of him, a murmur ran through the crowd. The firemen looked at one another and shook their heads. Then the walls of the building fell in with the roof, and a cry of horror went up from firemen and spectators alike.

"He is lost—he is lost!"—was the cry, and people shuddered as they heard it. They loved the brave young fireman because he had so often risked his life for others.

"Mark Howland is lost! Mark is dead! Mark is killed!" passed from mouth to mouth, and half the town had heard of it long before the fire was subdued.

The very sparks that ascended above the burning building seemed to have a peculiar fascination for those who looked on. The people could not leave as long as a glow of coal was seen. The fact that the gallant young fireman had perished there seemed to hold them spell-bound to the spot. Tears streamed down the

cheeks of hundreds of people who knew and loved the daring young fireman. Even the rival firemen groaned as they thought of his fate. In the meantime Mark was in the house five or six doors away from the fire watching the young child whose life he had saved, unconscious that half the town was mourning him as dead in the flames at that moment.

"Do you know whose child she is, ma'am?" he asked of the woman of the house.

"No, sir, I do not," she replied. "There were many children in that house, and I never knew half of them by sight."

"This child lived on the third floor, I think."

"Did you find anyone else in the room where you found her?" she asked.

"I did not—I stumbled over her by accident, as I was too much blinded by the smoke even to see her. Her parents may have been lying near by her for all I know."

"Then I shall leave her here with you, ma'am. Will you give me your name, so I may know whom to ask for when I come up?"

"Yes, sir. My name is Margaret Hennessy. I am a widow and live here with my fifteen-year-old boy, who has run out to the fire."

"Are you not afraid he may be hurt, ma'am?" Mark asked.

"Oh, no, sir. Harry is a wide-awake boy, who knows how to take care of himself."

Just then the child began to cry for her mother. The tender heart of the widow went out to her, and she took her in her arms again, and began to sing an old nursery song which Mark remembered well.

"Give her a cup of milk if you have any in the house," suggested Mark.

"I have none, sir," she replied. "I am too poor to keep it in the house."

"Pardon me, ma'am," and he drew a bill from his pocket and laid it to her lap. "Buy all the milk the child wants, and when that is gone I'll see that more is forthcoming."

"You are very kind, sir."

"No more than yourself, ma'am, for you are giving her all a mother's care. Is there anyone in the building who has milk?"

"No, but the girl in the rooms below us will get some in a very few minutes if you ask her to."

"Then I'll ask her to get some," said he, dashing out of the room and downstairs to the next floor.

Then he pounded on the door till a girl came to see what was wanted.

"Can you get a quart of milk for the lady upstairs, who has a young child to feed? Here is the money. You can keep the change," and he slipped a half-dollar into her hand as he spoke. The girl was dumfounded. She could not realize that the Widow Hennessy had a young baby, so she darted upstairs to see it. In a few minutes she hastened downstairs to get the milk and bring it up to the child. Mark never thought of anything but the young child whose life he had saved. He remained there to see if she would drink the milk when it came. To his great delight, the child drank a quart and called for more.

"Let her have all she wants," he said. "I won't take enough to hurt her."

The widow let her have another cupful, and the child drank it eagerly till she was satisfied. Then she looked around the room and called for her mother. The very motherly way of the widow won her confidence, however, and in a little while the little child was asleep.

"Poor thing!" said Mark. "She made a narrow escape from a terrible death."

"Yes," said the widow, "and I hope her parents are as lucky."

"If they have perished," said Mark, after a pause, "I'll adopt the child as my own."

"Are you a married man?"

"Oh, no. I am just of age."

"Then the child would have no mother."

"That's so. I suppose I could hire one," and he looked at the widow as if he half expected her to suggest a proper one to be a mother to the child, if indeed the child was motherless.

But before the widow could say anything more her fifteen-year-old son dashed into the room, almost out of breath after running up four flights of stairs, and cried:

"Oh, mother! It was an awful fire, and lots of women and children were burned up, and Mark Howland, the brave fireman, was burned up, too!"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the widow. "Is it possible! And he was such a brave young fireman, too."

"Did you hear anybody say that Mark Howland was burned to death?" Mark asked, turning to the lad.

"Yes, sir. He ran into the burning house when all the other firemen hollered at him to come back, and he never came out any more. The roof and walls fell in and—of course he was burned up. You must have got scorched, too, mister."

"Yes, I was in a pretty hot place for a minute or two, but I am all right now, I guess."

"He rescued the child, Harry," said the mother to her son, "and came down through our scuttle with it." Do you know the child?"

Harry went forward and leaned over the sleeping child.

"Who, yes, mother!" he exclaimed. "That is Mrs. Sprague's baby. They say she and her husband both perished in the fire. The child's name is Lily."

The mother's eyes filled with tears as she looked down at the child.

"Madam, will you keep the child at my expense till called by her relatives?" Mark asked, making an effort to suppress his emotion.

"Yes, sir," was her prompt reply. "I already feel a mother's love for her."

"Of course. Any true woman would. I'll come around and see you in a day or two when I have had my wits attended to."

"Please give me your name so that I could inquire about the child if need arise."

"My name is Mark Howland," he said.

His mother and son stared.

They stared at him as if he were one just from the dead, but in another moment she exclaimed:

"Good gracious, you have escaped!"

"Yes," he said, "I had a narrow escape, and now I want to let my friends know that I am alive," and with that he bowed himself out and ran down the four flights of stairs to the street.

CHAPTER XI.—Bensoni Again.

On his way downstairs Mark asked himself the question:

"Where was the Phantom Fireman to-night? I was in greater peril than ever before, and yet I saw nothing of him. Is he leaving me to look out for myself? I would not have gone in there had I not thought he would have been there to show me the way out again. I did wrong and was punished. I won't run such a risk again."

Out on the street he found the crowd dispersing, and people were talking of the fate of the young fireman who had perished in the flames. Everybody had a kind word for him, and he felt grateful to everybody. He made his way toward the fire, where two engines were still playing on the embers. Though their services were no longer needed, the members of Hook and Ladder No. 4 remained to see if they could not get the charred remains of their beloved foreman. They had heavy hearts, for they had no hope that he had escaped alive. In fact, no one ever believed that escape was possible. Mark had his trumpet still slung over his shoulder. Placing it to his lips, he sung out with startling clearness:

"Hook and Ladder No. 4!"

Every man of them knew the voice. They sprang forward to connect with the truck, looking at the trumpeter as if they believed him to be the ghost of their young foreman. Mark saw what ailed them, and said:

"We are all right, boys. Back to your quarters!"

"Mark Howland is safe! Mark Howland is safe!" cried everybody, and but few people in the town failed to hear the good news before going to bed that night.

After marching through several streets with him on their shoulders the firemen made their way to their headquarters, where Mark made a short speech to them, detailing the manner of his escape and the rescue of the little child. The brave firemen said that if the child's parents were lost they would make her the daughter of the company. The excitement over the narrow escape of Mark and the little babe was the greatest ever known among the firemen in Groveton. Nothing else was talked of for several days, and when it was known that the child's parents had perished in the flames a popular subscription was at once started for her benefit. It soon swelled into the thousands, and the fund was placed in the bank to be used in supporting and educating Lily Sprague.

The company adopted her, and also contributed a certain sum of money each month to be expended for her benefit. The mayor congratulated Mark on his escape, and started another fund to buy him a trumpet made of solid silver, with his name and record engraved on it. It was a happy day for Mark when he called on the Widow Hennessy to see little Lily, who had ceased to grieve for her mother. On his way back to his boarding house he met Bensoni, the Italian fruit vender, and was stopped by him.

"Have you heard anything of him?" the Italian asked.

"Nothing," replied Mark. "But I have a man at work who will soon let me hear from him. I

hope. You must know that I am quite as anxious to hear from him as you or anyone else could be."

"Yes, signor, more than anyone else," said the Italian. "And yet I am anxious to see him, too."

"What for?"

"I am charged with a message for him from your father."

Mark stared. He did not know that before, and now the old Italian was more of a mystery than ever to him.

Mark walked away more mystified than ever about the Italian. But he was more than ever determined to find out something about his Uncle Harry. He called on old Ben Wright's niece, and asked if she had heard from her uncle.

"No, sir, not a word," she replied.

"Well, that's strange; he has been gone three or four weeks now, and he has had plenty of time to get settled."

"Yes, sir, and I don't know what to make of it. He promised to write to me as soon as he was settled in his new home."

"Well, I am going to speak to Mr. Dennison and ask him for the address, if you have no objections."

"I have none now, after so long a silence on Uncle Ben's part," she replied.

"Then I'll see him to-morrow," said Mark, as he rose to leave.

"Will you send me the address as soon as you get it?" the lady asked.

"Yes, of course."

He went away, and the next day at noon called at the office of Mr. Dennison, who received him with a very pleasant greeting.

"Mr. Dennison," he said, "you have been very kind to an old friend of my father—a Mr. Wright, and his niece here in Groveton tells me that you have given him a home in New York City. Will you be so kind as to give me his address, as his niece has not heard from him since he left her house?"

At the first mention of the old ex-fireman's name Mr. Dennison seemed to be very much disturbed, but he was himself again ere Mark had finished speaking. He took a bundle of letters from his pocket and began fumbling them.

"I've got his address somewhere," he said.

Mark sat down and waited for him to find it. But after looking over the package of letters for some time, the manufacturer said:

"I thought I had here somewhere a letter from the manager of the home. I think the name of it is the Old Fireman's Home, or something like that. I will send it to you if I can find it. If I can't, a letter to him, addressed to the care of the home, will reach him."

"Thank you, Mr.," said Mark, rising to retire.

"I say, Howland," called Mr. Dennison, "I would like to have a talk with you on business. How would you like to be the foreman or superintendent of a machine shop out in California?"

"I don't want to go to California, sir," he replied.

"Why not?"

"Because I am attached to Groveton and don't want to leave it."

"That is foolish. You could soon make a fortune in California."

"Still you have made a big fortune here, Mr. Dennison," replied Mark.

"But I brought quite a fortune with me to start with. Had I been penniless I would not have been much better off to-day. In this part of the world it takes money to make money."

"Well, I'll think about it. I am not anxious to leave Groveton, though."

"Make up your mind very soon, for I wish to get it going as soon as possible," said Mr. Dennison, as Mark bowed himself out of the office.

"I don't care to go to California," said Mark, as he returned to the shop. "I have friends here who are friends indeed, and I would rather live and die in their midst than go among strangers and make new ones."

He went to work and kept at it till the hour for striking off came. Then he ceased work and prepared to leave the shop with one of the workmen, who was also one of the members of Hook and Ladder No. 4. He was walking up the street conversing with his companion, when he saw Bensoni running toward him at the top of his speed. The Italian was so greatly excited that he was wild-eyed and incoherent.

"Signor Howland!" he hoarsely cried, "I have seen him—I have seen him!"

"Seen who?" Mark demanded.

"Your uncle!"

"Where? When?"

"At the depot. He was in a crowd. I tried to get to him, but could not, and suddenly he disappeared altogether. He must have got on a train for New York."

Mark said he was going to take the next train for New York and asked the Italian if he wanted to go along. The Italian said he would go. So they took the next train and when they reached the city Mark left Bensoni at a small hotel, while he repaired to the home of Old Aunt Edith Warner, to whom he told of his search for his uncle Henry.

Mark made a thorough search for his uncle, but it came to nothing, and he then hunted up a detective and let him finish it; so he and Bensoni went back to Groveton. Two days later Bensoni was stabbed by an unknown assassin. The Italian was removed to a hospital.

CHAPTER XII.—The Visit—and Trap.

A few days after the deadly attack on the Italian Mark Howland received a message from Mr. Dennison, to the effect that he wanted to see him at his house that evening on particular business. Of course Mark went. He was resolved, however, not to let the rich manufacturer tempt him to leave Groveton.

"He wants me to go to California for him," he said to himself, as he strolled out toward the home of the rich man. "I have better friends here in Groveton than I may be able to find in any other part of the world. I am going to stay right here."

He reached the house, rang the door bell, and was admitted into a richly-furnished sitting room, where Mr. Dennison soon joined him.

"You are kind to call so promptly, Mr. Howland," said Mr. Dennison, as he shook hands with the young visitor.

"You were very kind to send for me," returned Mark. "It was my duty to call as soon as I could, which I have done."

Mr. Dennison was dressed in a smoking cap and wrapper.

"I have been indulging in a fine Havana cigar," he said. "I am sure you would enjoy one," and he extended a couple toward the young visitor.

Mark took one, lit it, and then leaned back to enjoy the fragrant weed. It was indeed a fine cigar, and he asked himself the question as to whether or not the reputation of the old man as a stingy individual was not undeserved. Mr. Dennison seated himself near him, and remarked:

"You were in New York the other day, were you not?"

"Yes, sir. I ran over to the city for a day or two on important business."

"Have you given my proposition about business in California any consideration?"

"Yes, sir. I considered it for some time, and then decided that I did not want to go out there."

"Well, I am sorry to hear of that. I had counted on being able to induce you to go, and am willing to pay you a salary that would put you at the head of the concern."

"I have made up my mind not to live anywhere else but in Groveton, Mr. Dennison. I have so many warm friends here, that nothing could induce me to leave them."

"Then I shall have to give up all hope in that direction," remarked the old man.

"Yes, sir, for I really cannot go," replied Mark.

"But can't I induce you to go out there and give the shop a start, place a good man in charge, and then come back? That would not take many weeks of your time."

"Well, I'll have to think about that, and it will largely depend upon whether my present employer could spare me from his shop. You see, I am thinking of his interest as well as my own."

"Yes, yes, that's right and proper. I am sure you would guard my interest well, and that is why I am anxious to have you go out there and make this investment for me. I am too old to make such a long trip, you know."

"It seems to me, Mr. Dennison," said Mark, "that were I as old as you are, and with the wealth you have, I'd sell out everything, put my money in the bank, and retire from business. A man at your age ought to have rest."

The old man looked at him and smiled.

"Which shows that you do not understand these things," he said. "Were I to stop now I'd live, and in a year or so die. Old as I am, I don't want to die just yet. Besides, I am not as old as I seem by several years."

"I do not know that," said Mark.

"Yes, people think me much older than I am, but I am not going to tell you my age, because it is not necessary that I should."

"Of course not. I am glad to know that you are a creature of living longer than your friends think you are."

"I am of a long lived race," said the man. "I have taken good care of myself, I have the right to expect to live at least thirty years longer."

"I am sure that I hope you may, sir," remarked the young visitor.

"Thank you," said the host.

Just then a servant came in with a tray, on which was a bottle and two glasses.

"I have some fine old wine," Mr. Dennison added, as he took up the bottle and a glass and passed both to Mark. "Try some of it."

"I seldom drink any kind of stimulants, Mr. Dennison," Mark replied, "but will taste a little of it," and he poured out about a tablespoonful into his glass.

"It is a very mild wine. A pint of it would not stimulate one as much as a spoonful of brandy would," and he took the bottle and filled Mark's glass with wine, after which he filled his own.

Mark drank about half of his glass, whilst the old man merely tasted his, so busy did he seem to be with talking. Mark liked the flavor of the mild wine, and soon finished his glass.

"Have another glass," said Mr. Dennison, offering the bottle again.

"Not any more, thanks," said Mark, placing the glass back on the table. "I don't think I should have taken so much, but it is so delicious I could not resist the temptation."

"I never knew it to hurt anyone," said the host. "I often drink a half bottle in an evening."

They then talked of various subjects for nearly an hour, by which time Mark felt himself very drowsy—so much so that it was only by a determined exertion of the will power that he could keep his eyes open.

"Your wine has made me very drowsy," he remarked to his host.

"It is a soother—which is why I like to take a glass of it before going to bed."

"If I were in my room now I could sleep well."

"Take a nap where you are," said the host. "It will pass off in a half hour, and then you will wake up very much refreshed."

Mark could not resist the temptation. He leaned back in the easy-chair and gave way to the delicious languor which seemed to have taken possession of him. Fanciful memories flitted through his mind, and many incidents of his childhood came up before him. Then he heard strains of delightful music, sweeter than any he had ever heard before, and he thought that life was one continuous scene of beauty and pleasure. By and by he drifted into oblivion and knew no more.

When he came to Mark found himself lying under a pile of rubbish in a dark room. He felt with both hands and realized he was between two brick walls. He took out his knife and began to dig out a brick from the wall. After a time he succeeded, and then removed some bricks until he could crawl through. He now found himself in a rear extension of Mr. Dennison's house. There was a small apartment, and Mr. Dennison himself, accompanied by a policeman, was waiting for Mark, and took him to the police station charged with attempted robbery. The trial came off and Dennison's lawyer had it postponed until they had finished their case.

One day Dennison rang Dennison's bell and on being answered, the porter placed at his visitor.

"We meet again, Henry, Howard," said Dennison.

Dennison turned pale.

"Is my brother dead?" he asked.

"Yes—years ago. And now you owe me \$170."

000, which you will pay or I'll tell your nephew, Mark Howland, the whole story."

CHAPTER XIII.—The Rich Man and Bensoni.

Henry Howland sat there in front of the Italian like a man who had suddenly become petrified. He glared at his visitor with a sort of stony stare, and did not seem to have any life in him even to blink his eyelids. On the other hand the Italian grinned a triumphant grin, and chuckled in the most aggravating way imaginable.

"You have played and lost, Henry Howland," he said. "You will recollect that I told you on that night when you brought your brother on board my ship that if you undertook to play me false I would find a way to make you pay me. You see now that when dealing with men as bad as yourself it is best to hold faith with them. Your nephew is looking for you. He does not know that you are his uncle yet, but he will know all when I fail to turn up to-morrow, and then you'll have music all around you. The firemen of Groveton will rise up and tear you to pieces."

"I can't pay you so much money now," said the other hoarsely, "but give me a week to raise it on property and you shall have it."

"Very well. I'll give you one week. Remember that I want \$170,000 in one week."

"Yes—you shall have the money; I can easily raise it if I have time."

"Of course you can."

"What will you do then?"

"Go to Italy and settle down in my native place."

"Well, come back in a week and you shall have the money."

The Italian arose and left the house, the rich man going him to the door instead of the servant.

When the door closed behind Bensoni he looked back at the house for a moment or two and muttered to himself:

"He has paid his day. My time is coming now," and with that he turned and wended his way up the street. The reflections of James Dennison—of Henry Howland—were bitter indeed, after the manner of him that night. He retired to his private apartment, after giving orders that no person was to be admitted, and sat down to think. He sat up half the night thinking. Sleep troubled him not and when he retired it was simply to rest—not to sleep. When morning came a raging fever had possession of him, and his physician was sent for, who came and prescribed complete and perfect rest and freedom from business.

It was soon known that the rich manufacturer was very ill, and Mark Howland expressed sympathy for him. He gave visits, and the physicians excluded visitors altogether from the house. The man heard of it, and wanted to see him.

"He may die," he muttered, "and then I would have no chance for my money. If he will give me money for the use of it will be a claim against his estate, which would be good in law. What a fool I was the other night. He would have given it gladly. I'll go down to his house and tell my

name in to him, and he won't dare refuse to see me. Let him do so if he dares."

He went down to the house and found the doorbell disconnected, and a man there to see whoever called.

"I wish to see Mr. Dennison," he said to the man.

"Mr. Dennison is very ill," was the reply. "His physician has prohibited him from seeing anyone."

"If you will take my name in to Mr. Dennison he will not refuse to see me."

"I dare not do that, sir. The doctor has forbidden me to do so. Mr. Dennison has nothing to do with anything now as long as he is in the doctor's hands."

Bensoni's eyes flashed. He was very angry, and leaning over toward the man, said:

"It will be the worse for you if your master learns that you turned me away without speaking to him about it."

"I am obeying orders. You had better go away and see the doctor at his office."

"But——"

"See here now—go away, or it'll be the worse for you," said the man, in low, concentrated tones. "I don't want to tell you again, either."

Bensoni straightened himself up to his full height, and was about to make an indignant reply, when the man beckoned to a policeman across the street, who promptly came over to the house.

"Arrest that man—he annoys Mr. Dennison."

The officer collared him and led him away.

CHAPTER XIV.—The Busy Fruit Seller.

The officer led the Italian off up the street. He carried him to the station, and then he was locked up. The next day Mark saw the facts in the papers.

"Old Bensoni locked up for calling at the house and insisting on seeing Dennison!" he exclaimed. "I can't understand it. I'll go down and see him."

He called at the station and was shown into the cell where the fruit dealer was.

"Why, how's this?" he asked.

"I am locked up for trying to see Dennison on business."

"And they wouldn't let you see him?"

"No—the fellow wouldn't take him any message from me."

"He must be very ill, then."

"Yes, I suppose so. He owes me money. I have no show for it if he dies. I wanted him to give me his note for it."

Mark was astonished. He did not dream that the old Italian even knew the rich manufacturer, much less have business with him. Howland went to his lawyer and told him of the case.

"I'll represent the case to the justice," said the lawyer, "and he will be discharged with a reprimand, I guess, as he did not intend to do wrong."

The lawyer went to the police justice, and represented the case to the court. He said that the prisoner was a fruit dealer, with a reprimand and a warning to keep away from the house till Dennison was able to attend to business. Ben-

soni left court and went his way, not even stopping to thank Mark or the lawyer. He sought out the minister of the church which Dennison attended, and laid the case before him, offering a large sum if he would call and get him to sign the note. The minister refused pointedly, and ordered him out of his study. Bensoni could not understand how some men could refuse to do certain things for pay. Time wore on, and the rich manufacturer grew worse instead of better. His doctor began to despair of being able to get him on his feet again. One day the patient said to the doctor:

"Doctor, I think I am going to die."

The doctor looked at him for a moment, and asked.

"Do you really think so?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then it will be difficult to save you, for unless you have faith that you will get well, medicine can do you but little good. But aside from that, the chances are against you."

"I know that. How long do you think I can hold out?"

"Only a day or two longer."

"Well, I want you to send for my lawyer and young Mark Howland at once."

The doctor wrote a note to both parties and sent a messenger with them. Mark was at work in the shop when he received the note. He promptly washed up, and made all haste to get there. The lawyer reached the gate at the same time, and they entered the house together. Mark was astonished at the wreck that lay on the bed before him. Dennison motioned Mark to approach.

"Mark Howland," said he, in a feeble tone of voice, "I am your Uncle Henry."

"Uncle Henry!" gasped Mark, in dumfounded amazement.

"Yes, I am your Uncle Henry. I have a confession to make and ask your forgiveness, for in a few hours I shall be no more."

"I forgive everything in advance, Uncle Henry," said Mark, interrupting him, tears filling his eyes.

"That relieves me very much, and I thank you," said the sick man, "but I have a confession to make in the presence of these friends—the doctor and my lawyer. Years ago, when you were a mere lad of three or four years, I drugged your father and put him on board an Italian vessel called the Foscari, commanded by Captain Randini, who agreed for a certain sum of money to make way with him at sea, and——"

"My!" gasped Mark, withdrawing his hand from the grasp of the sick man.

"Hear me through," said Dennison. "He did not kill him. The ship was wrecked, and the crew lived several years on an island, where your father died. The captain told him all—of my treachery—and received from him papers that he now holds. He is now here in Groveton under the name of Bensoni, and——"

"Bensoni! I know him!" exclaimed Mark.

"Yes—I have seen you together. He has been trying to force a large slice of my wealth from me as the price of silence. I tried to put him out of the way, and you, too, but failed both times. I confess all now, and want your forgiveness. All my fortune I leave to you. Draw it out as fast as possible, I beg, and let me properly sign it in the presence of witnesses."

"I will," said the lawyer, proceeding at once to draw up the paper."

"I ask all of you to keep this a secret, as far as you can for the sake of the name of Howland. But if it is necessary to do so, do not spare me in telling the truth. I have not enjoyed the wealth I gained so wickedly, for I have grown old before my time, and my conscience has lashed me for years. I leave it with you to reward Edith Warner for her faithfulness in caring for you."

"I shall take care to do that, Uncle Henry, for she was a mother to me, and is to this day."

"Yes, she is a good woman. I knew she would not abandon you. She has more heart than I. I did not know what had become of you till the papers began to speak of your courage and skill as a fireman. Then I found out who you were. I wanted to tell you all and take you in with me in business, but had not the courage to do it. Now, in the presence of death, I unburden my mind and tell everything."

"The will is now ready," said the lawyer, who had been busy writing at a table while the sick man was making his confession.

It was short, comprehensive and to the point, devising everything of which he died possessed of to Mark Howland. The doctor called in two of the men servants in the house, who saw him sign it, and then signed with the doctor as witnesses.

"That's all right now," said the lawyer. "Nothing on earth can break it."

"I don't want it broken," said the sick man. "Do you again forgive me, Mark?"

"Yes, Uncle Henry, fully and freely. The mystery of my father's fate has rested heavily on my mind for years. It is all clear now, and I am glad he did not die a death of violence. I feel much relieved."

"You will have great wealth when I am gone. Use it for the good of others. I have been a hard man with my workmen. I cared for nothing but gold. I believed in nothing but money. You can do much good. Use it well, and you will be happier than I have been."

"You have talked enough now," said the doctor, interrupting him. "You had better try to sleep some."

"I can't sleep any more. I'll soon sleep to wake no more. Let me talk while I can. It matters not. I can't live many hours longer."

"You had better rest a little, Uncle Henry," said Mark. "The doctor knows what is best for you."

"You will sit here by me till the last, Mark?"

"Yes, uncle, till the last."

Mark sat down by the bedside and held the hand of the dying man in his own. The patient's breathing was hard, and at times he seemed to be going fast. Mark watched the changes on his pallid features, and for the first time in his life sat by and gazed at a human life slowly ebbing away. Suddenly the sick man awoke with a start, and glared at the foot of the bed with an expression of horror on his face.

Mark looked there, too, and saw the Phantom Fireman. Henry Howland gave a scream and shuddered—a gasp, and all was over.

CHAPTER XV.—Conclusion.

"It is all over," said the doctor.

"Yes, all over," remarked the lawyer. "Shall I hold the will for you, Mr. Howland?"

"If you please," replied Mark, who was pale as death over the fact that the Phantom Fireman had stood at the foot of the bed but a few minutes before.

The others had not seen him, else they would have been disturbed as he was. That his uncle had seen him he was convinced, for the expression on his face indicated that he did. Mark left the house and went back to his own quarters, intending to shut himself up in his room and think over the situation. But at the door he met Bensoni, the Italian, who rushed up to him, exclaiming:

"I have found your uncle, signor."

"So have I, Captain Randini, and he told me the fate of my father."

He staggered back, gasping, as if choking.

"My uncle told me all and then died, leaving me all his wealth. If you can escape before I can set the officers after you, all right. I shall not pursue you if you leave America."

The guilty wretch did not wait to hear more. He turned on his heel and ran back to his lodging, where he took a bag of money from a secure hiding place and hastened to the depot, just in time to catch a train for New York. Mark never saw or heard of him again. The death of the manufacturer created a stir in Groveton, but not half as much as the publication of his will did.

That was a genuine surprise to the public, for everyone knew that they were enemies since the morning of Mark's arrest at the house of the deceased. Mark sat down by the side of old Aunt Edith Warner, and related to her the whole wonderful story. Old Joe McGrath, who was just on the eve of departing from his home, remained a few days longer to rejoice with Mark and the family.

To satisfy public curiosity about the matter Mark went to make a statement to the press, to the effect that his Uncle Henry and himself did not understand their relationship till the day of his death. But he did not say anything about the fact of his father, and the witnesses to the will were dumb on the subject.

A month after the death of the manufacturer he attended the funeral of the deceased at the funeral home, and Mr. Dyer, the lawyer, read the will to the family. The will was in favor of Mark, and the fortune was divided between him and the other heirs. The will was a surprise to all, and a

clerk told him that a lady wished to see him. He turned around and found himself face to face with the Widow Hennessy, who had charge of the little child whose life he had saved months before at a fire.

"Ah! Glad to see you, Mrs. Hennessy," he said, greeting her cordially. "How is little Lily?"

"She is well. I have come to ask what you are going to do with her."

"Oh, I am going to provide for her, and you, too."

She blushed all over and said:

"But I am going to be married again, sir."

"You are?"

"Yes, sir, and my intended husband wants me to surrender the child to you."

"Very well. Send her down to my house. Aunt Edith will take charge of her; and if you'll let me know when you marry I'll try to show you some appreciation of your kindness to the child."

She thanked him and went away a happy woman. When she married a month later she received a check for one thousand dollars from the brave young fireman, with a letter full of good wishes for her future happiness. Aunt Edith took little Lily in charge and devoted a mother's care to her. The next day Mark drove out to the Bartley farm, and spent the greater part of the day there. When he came away Sarah Bartley was his promised wife. The next month they were married with great eclat in the grand mansion he had purchased for their future home, and settled down to enjoy the happiness they so well deserved. Mark never saw the Phantom Fireman again, and the secret of its appearance remains locked in his breast to this day.

Next week's issue will contain "BEN BREVIER; or, THE ROMANCE OF A YOUNG PRINTER."

FIND WATCH LONG LOST

Twenty-two years ago—'way back in 1902—Jewett Dyer, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., business man, had a gold watch stolen from him in Baltimore. The watch was valued at \$200. He reported the theft to the police, but never heard of it again.

Recently he received a letter through the police from the chief of police in Baltimore, saying they had recovered his watch and asking him to identify it. Jewett Dyer did so and then received a letter from the chief of police asking him to come to Baltimore and receive his watch and the money.

PLUCK AND LUCK
CURRENT NEWS

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AN AUTOMATIC BURGLAR GUN

A burglar gun, which operates automatically without requiring the presence of any other person than the burglar, has been invented by Francis F. Jobson of Mentone, Ala. The device consists of a barrel mounted on a standard and having a firing pin slidably mounted on the standard and actuated by a coiled spring. A trigger latches this firing pin in retracted position and it is operated by a cord which is secured to some suitable object in the room so that the trespasser in going about will come in contact with it and thereby release the trigger and discharge the gun. If it is intended to kill or seriously wound the trespasser the cord is placed in line with the barrel of the gun, while if it is intended merely to slightly wound or frighten off the intruder, the cord may be placed at an angle to the barrel of the gun. The device has actually been used with success in trapping thieves in the inventor's town, where systematic robberies were occurring.

34 BULLETS REQUIRED TO KILL HUGE BEAR

Thirty-four bullets were required to kill a huge black bear that had been slaughtering sheep in the vicinity of Bismark, Grant County, W. Va.

The losses resulting from its raids had become so serious that farmers decided to trap it. A strong pen was constructed on the farm of M. R. Henline, six sheep were placed in it and four men heavily armed hid nearby at nightfall and waited.

About 9 o'clock the bear was seen swinging along toward the pen. After a preliminary survey, it climbed over the wall of the inclosure and attacked one of the sheep. The four men then began firing. Peppered with bullets the bear made lunges at its assailants, each time being driven back by a shot at close range.

Eventually one bullet penetrated the heart and the animal dropped. The bear weighed 450 pounds.

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CHAPTER IV.

Jack As A Good Samaritan.

A certain man named Oakley, a carpenter whom he had known all his life, was in the habit of coming in regularly for drinks.

Finally he became so addicted to the use of intoxicants that he lost his job.

Jack heard of it, and he thought that Oakley would keep away from the saloon for lack of money to pay for his drinks.

Instead of doing so, he would come in, take a drink, sit down in a corner, and wait for some acquaintance to come along and invite him to drink again.

Jack knew his family well. He had a wife and several children, one of whom was a pretty girl about his own age, who had to go to work in a factory.

The man had a great many acquaintances among the workingmen, as he was a genial, good-natured fellow.

Many of them would drop in, and seeing him there, invite him to drink with them.

He never declined.

Hutchings did not put him out, because he had been a regular customer for years, but in the middle of the afternoon one day the proprietor whispered to Jack and asked:

"You know where Oakley lives, don't you?"

"Yes, sir, of course I do. I have known him all my life."

"Well, he is out of work now, and is sitting around here to drink with his friends when they come in. Instead of doing that he should be out hunting for another job. See if you can take him home."

"I don't know how I can, sir."

"Well, try it, anyway."

It was the first commission of the kind that the proprietor had given him. He did not object to it, but on the contrary, he agreed with the proprietor that Oakley ought to go home; so Jack went over to him and half-whispered in his ear:

"Mr. Oakley, I think I know where you can get a job."

"Eh! What? Where?"

"Well, I won't tell you until you sober up perfectly straight. You will be denied at once if you go there as full as you are now; so come with me, and I'll go home with you. Then you stay there. Don't touch another drop and to-morrow I will tell you where to go."

"All right. Let me have another drink and I will go with you."

"I can't do that, Mr. Oakley. You'll have to ask Mr. Hutchings, but it would be much better

for you to go home without it. Mr. Hutchings told me I could go home with you."

It took a lot of persuasion to get him started.

He was so much under the influence of whisky that he couldn't walk straight, but Jack locked arms with him and they went out together.

It was quite a walk to his house.

Mrs. Oakley saw them coming.

She knew that Jack was employed at the saloon. She looked inquiringly at Jack as they entered the house, but he shook his head to her, saying:

"Mrs. Oakley, give Mr. Oakley a glass of cold milk if you've got it."

"I haven't got it," was the reply; "but I will go over to a neighbor and get it. What is the matter with him?"

"He has simply been drinking, and has taken too much. I want to send him to a place where can probably get work, but he mustn't go there until he is straight again."

That put hope into the heart of the unfortunate wife and mother. She took a small pitcher, ran over to a neighbor and returned with nearly a quart of milk in it.

Oakley was thirsty enough to drink anything, so he came near emptying the pitcher without using the glass, after which Jack took him to a lounge in the dining-room, where he persuaded him to lay down.

Then he went into the front room and told her just what the situation was.

"I don't know that he can get a job there, but there is a bare chance. Mr. Wilcox, the contractor, is about to start the building of three houses."

"Why, he has been to Wilcox several times for work, but he told him that he had none for him," she replied.

"Yes, but it was when he had the smell of liquor on him. Get him perfectly sober, and then have him go again to Mr. Wilcox and tell him that he has stopped drinking and wants to work. I happen to know that he is looking for more workmen."

The day before that Jack had heard the contractor say in the saloon that he had a contract to build three house and needed some good, sober and steady workmen.

He cautioned the poor woman not to let him get away from her, and when he went out of the house, to go with him, if she couldn't keep him at home. Until he did sober up it was entirely impossible to get a job.

She promised to do her best, and thanked Jack for bringing him home.

He returned to the saloon and Hutchings asked:

"Did you get him home?"

"Yes, sir, and his wife got about a quart of sweet milk for him and made him drink it."

"Good! Good!"

"I told both of them," continued Jack, "that if he could be sobered up and have no smell of whisky on his breath, and would go to Mr. Wilcox, the contractor, and say that he had quit drinking and wanted work, that he would get it. For I heard him say a few days ago that he wanted good, steady, sober workmen."

(To be continued.)

GOOD READING

FELLED BY LIGHTNING, GIRL, 14, IS UNINJURED

Miss Catherine Walker, fourteen-year-old daughter of Martin Walker, was thrown to the ground and stunned by a lightning flash the other day, but was not injured. The Walker farm is about seven miles north of Larned, Kan.

There was a light shower and Catherine was out in the yard driving in the little chickens. She glanced up at the windmill, she says, and became conscious of a flash of light before her eyes. Catherine fell to the ground stunned for a moment and a post of the windmill was shattered.

Eighteen of the little chickens were killed by the lightning.

ANCIENT RUINS IN PERU

Chimu is the name given by a chronicler to ruins of the capital and chief city of the Chimu people, which is situated on the seashore about four miles north of Truxillo, Peru. The remains cover a space fifteen miles long and five or six miles broad, and embrace the walls of vast palaces and temples, some of them ornamented with arabesque work and paintings. An aqueduct many miles long supplied the city with water, which was received in large reservoirs. There are several sepulchral mounds from which many objects of interest have been obtained. The name of the people, Chimu, is derived from the title of their sovereign. They were entirely distinct from the Incas in language, architecture and customs. According to tradition they came from beyond the sea, and drove out the savages who had occupied this region (about Twelfth Century). They built great cities, remarkable for the size of some of their buildings. Their aqueducts and irrigation were very extensive. The Chimu people excelled in gold and silver work; in the manufacture of cloth and pottery. The Incas called them Yuma. Descendants of the race still live in the same region, but their language, called Mura, is dying. A grammar and list of words are still extant. The ruins of the Chimu are the most striking archeological remains in Peru. The ruins are commonly seen in museums and houses called "Mura" was of their manufacture.

THE GYPSY MOTH

The gypsy moth has cost Massachusetts many millions of dollars and New York a smaller amount. Massachusetts has tried all means to combat the gypsy moth. She set the school children to work and everything that could be suggested has been tried. New York has done something like it.

Now it is proposed to use toy balloons in the war against the moth. Thousands of these balloons will be released from 15 temporary weather stations. The balloons will be used to try to get the secret of the spread of the moth. It is found that a gypsy moth, while a winged insect, does not spread through flight. The females are unable to fly at all because of the weight of their

bodies. The big spread comes when the young moths are first let out from the eggs. They have long hairs growing out of their bodies and also a silk floss. These buoy them up until they fly long distances to find food, some of them going as far as five miles from the starting place.

It is something like the same thing with the clothes moth. No man can tell with exactness how clothes moths can show such extraordinary pertinacity in seeking out wool to feed on. The female clothes moth does not fly but hides in the cracks and corners of the house and the little caterpillars in some manner emerge to get their food in a man's best suit.

The 7,000 toy balloons sent out last year had made no tags with a request for a return. Of them 400 tags were recovered before the end of the season. They were found throughout Southern New England and one was found off Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, having gone about 400 miles in 18 hours. Seven others covered distances from 110 to 145 miles. This year many thousands of little balloons will be released from 15 temporary stations extending along a wide front from Connecticut to the Canadian border. There will be an effort to discover the secret of the winds responsible for the spread of the pest.

The whole country is interested in this, as it is in the spread of the boll weevil. New York is now feeling the same alarm that Massachusetts has felt for the last quarter of a century when the first imported moths escaped from confinement in Boston.

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INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

SPARK INTERFERENCE

We are told that troublesome spark signals should not be so disturbing to us because a 500 kilocycle signal (600 meters wave length) is far enough away from most broadcast frequencies so that but little interference should be experienced except by those who are very near the spark station. But most of the trouble does not come from this spark signal frequency. For some reason better known to others than to us, many spark sets near New York Harbor are operated on a frequency of 666 kilocycle (450 meters), right in the middle of the broadcast band. At a recent meeting of radio experts in New York representing the U. S. Department of Commerce, the Canadian Government, and the commercial radio companies, it was agreed that spark transmission should be done away with as soon as practicable (perhaps within a year) and that the 666-kilocycle frequency should not be used at all by ships in American waters.

A DIAL VERNIER

In these days of high powered transmitting stations and superselective receiving sets, it is often quite necessary that the adjustment of the various dials on a receiving set be made with great care. Many fans possess receiving sets whose condensers, variometers, variocouplers, etc., are not equipped with vernier adjustments. Therefore, it is not always possible for the owner to differentiate closely between one station and another, for the dial cannot be moved slowly enough by the hand alone.

To alleviate this condition a very effective dial vernier can be made at home from a few spare parts. All that is necessary is a long flathead screw, a knurled binding post top, a soft rubber washer, two nuts to fit the screws, and a small spring. The screw should be of such a length that when the vernier is assembled the spring will keep the rubber washer away from the dial.

When it is desired to make very close adjustments of the dial the vernier simply is depressed until the edge of the soft rubber washer just touches the beveled edge of the main dial. Since the ratio of the diameter of the dial to that of the vernier is high, it is possible to move the vernier very slowly by turning the vernier.

In making rough adjustments the vernier can be forgotten. If it is desired to use the vernier the fingers simply are removed from it and the spring will push the washer away from the main dial, thus relieving it of unnecessary pressure.

EXPERT CLASSIFIES INTERFERENCE

In view of the active steps already taken by the Radio Club of America to combat the increasing interference of commercial code stations with broadcast programs, it is interesting to note the classification of interferences arranged by John A. L. Moran, consulting radio engineer. Mr. Moran has arranged the disturbing factors in six classes as follows:

1. Nearby broadcasting stations using wave frequencies close to that which it is desired to receive.

2. Radio telegraph transmitters of the spark type.

3. Oscillating receivers that produce whistling noises.

4. Distant broadcasting transmitters that radiate waves having frequencies within a few kilocycles of the frequency being received.

5. Atmospheric discharges, known as "strays" or "static."

6. Induction from lighting, trolley or power systems.

The life of the B Battery depends on the following factors, according to G. C. Furness, an authority on the subject: 1.—The quality of the cells in the battery. Each B battery consists of an assembly of a number of identical cells, each cell giving $1\frac{1}{2}$ volts. Fifteen cells are used in a 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ -volt battery, 30 in a 45-volt battery. Before a good B battery can be made a good dry cell must be made, and that is no easy task. 2.—The size of the cells used in the battery. The larger the cells the more electrical energy they contain, and the longer they last. Size should be proportionate to use. 3.—The amount of current taken from the B battery by the tube or tubes. Obviously, the greater the current the shorter the life of the battery. 4.—The amount of daily use of the receiving set. Again, obviously, the greater the numbers of hours the set is in use each day, the fewer days will the battery last. 5.—The "cut-off" voltage. As any battery is used its voltage gradually drops until a point is reached at which operation is unsatisfactory. That is the "cut-off" voltage, the lowest voltage at which the set gives satisfactory results. The lower this voltage the longer the life of the battery. 6.—The age of the B battery when put into service. All dry batteries lose energy when standing idle, some of them at a quicker rate than others. 7.—The personal factor that determines, not the life of the B battery, but how long you will use it, is your opinion as to when the concerts are too weak.

VACUUM TUBES IN THE MAKING

Tube making requires great care and patience. There are thirteen steps or processes in production, all of which must be watched closely in order to assure a perfect finished product. A test is made after each step is completed and, of course, a test after the tube is complete. The manufacture of a tube is begun by spinning a flare at the end of a short glass tube. This tube is then called the "flare." Five wires are then inserted in the "flare." Looking at a WD-11, one can see five wires in the inner unit, although there are but four contacts at the base. The fifth wire is a blind insert to support the plate. The end of the "flare" is melted and pinched to imbed the five wires securely. This is now called the "press." The five wires are next cut to their proper lengths and the elements spot welded in place by expert girl operators. The filament used in the WD-11 is a platinum-iridium alloy coated with chemicals to increase the thermionic emission. Now a small hole is blown into the glass "blank" or bulb of the tube to hold the

tube fused on its end. The "press" is then sealed to the bottom of this "blank" by welding with a gas flame. All air is then exhausted from the "blank" through the thin tube. This is done by inserting the glass tube into a piece of rubber tubing which in turn is connected to an exhaust pump. Before the pumps are turned on a covering which serves as an oven is pulled down over the tubes and they are subjected to a temperature of 400 degrees Centigrade to drive all gases from the glass walls and metal parts. While the exhausting is going on the plates are heated red-hot to remove the gases from the metal plates and supports. The pumps are turned off and a gas flame run around the bottom of the long glass tube until it melts off and forms the tip of the vacuum tube. The tube is now complete except for the base which is baked on by machine, the tips neatly soldered, and the tubes tested under conditions similar to actual receiving.

MORE RADIO FREQUENCY

Although radio frequency amplification is no new thing to the average experimenter or amateur, many who have but recently become interested would like to know something about radio frequency amplification.

Radio frequency amplification has been developed to a point of efficiency which makes it entirely satisfactory in the hands of the unskilled amateur.

Equally as good results are obtained with one stage of radio frequency amplification with detector as with audio frequency amplification of two stages.

There are no doubt many owners of the standard regenerative receivers who have converted disappointment into satisfaction by adding a stage of radio frequency to their sets in place of the second stage of audio frequency amplification.

One of the main reasons for the use of radio frequency amplification is that it allows the detector tube to do its work more efficiently. As is well known, a detector tube will fail to respond to a signal whose strength is below that of a certain value. By employing a stage of radio frequency prior to the detector tube it is possible that a weak signal will be amplified by the radio frequency stage to such a degree that the detector tube will find itself in a better position to rectify the signals.

Unlike audio frequency amplification, radio frequency is not affected by disturbing tube and circuit noises. This is so because these noises are of lower vibrations occurring at a relatively low rate and are effectively transmitted through the circuit designed for radio frequency current. In addition selectivity is greatly increased. A station of only twenty-five meters between another station is usually sufficient to bring in one station to the complete exclusion of the others.

In accordance with the nature of radio frequency amplification to realize its full possibilities as well as to explain the failure of certain makes of transformers to live up to expectations, account

must be taken of the fundamental difficulties that have to be overcome.

One of the obstacles has been the high capacity existing between the elements of tubes, a characteristic that presents great difficulties when using vacuum tubes as amplifiers. This is particularly true at the shorter wave lengths.

The realization that the efficiency of radio frequency amplification is directly dependent upon the accuracy with which the transformer is tuned to the incoming oscillates has aided transformer manufacturers. Correct application of this principle has resulted in transformers that are superior in range as well as in quality of reproduction in tone volume.

THREE COIL RECEIVER

More difficult to tune, but experts find results superior. Although the variometer regenerative set is recognized as being the more popular radio receiver in use, there is another that runs it a close second. It is the three coil honeycomb outfit, and in some respects is even superior to the variometer set. It is slightly more difficult to tune properly, but it is fully as efficient, and can be made to receive on any wave length used for any kind of radio communication to-day.

The tuning instruments consist of a three coil honeycomb mounting which is simply an arrangement for holding the coils, and two variable condensers. The one connected in the primary circuit should be of .001 mfd. capacity, which is the usual 43 plate size, and the one across the secondary of .00025 mfd., the equivalent of the usual 11 plate condenser.

The standard tube accessories, such as a tube socket, a rheostat, grid leak and condenser, binding posts, wire, screws, etc., are also required. The entire set can be assembled on a composition panel twelve inches long and eight or nine inches wide. The two condensers are mounted next to each other in the lower left hand portion of the panel with the coil mounting centered above them. The rheostat is fastened at the extreme right with the tube socket directly behind it.

The wiring of the honeycomb set can be done in twenty minutes. The left hand plug on the coil mounting is the primary, the middle one the secondary and the right hand one the tickler. The aerial wire goes directly to one end of the primary; the other end goes to the stationary plates of the .001 variable condenser, with the rotary plates of the latter to the ground. The .00025 variable condenser is shunted across the secondary plug, and thence across the grid condenser and the plus side of the filament battery. To minimize the effect of the hand on the tuning of the set, the rotary plates of the small condenser should be led to the filament side of the circuit. The tickler is inserted between the "P" post on the tube socket and one end of the phones. If, after completion of the set, moving the tickler coil has no effect on the signals, simply reverse the wires leading to it.

The wavelength range of this receiver depends on the sizes of the coils selected for the various plugs. For ordinary broadcast reception, the primary usually is an L-10, the secondary the same, and the tickler an L-10. This combination covers stations from about 200 to 500 meters.

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NEW YORK, JULY 23, 1924

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

MOST NUMEROUS FOREIGN BORN

According to the 1920 census, in the list of foreign-born white population there are 1,683,298 Germans, 1,607,458 Italians and 1,035,680 Irishmen in the United States. There are more Russians and more Poles in the United States than Irish, Russia being represented by 1,398,999 and Poland by 1,139,578 people.

DEER LEARN QUICKLY

The Bureau of National Parks reports that the deer in Glacier National Park, quick to learn the advantage of the immunity furnished by Uncle Sam's protective arm, have remained in the vicinity of the park administration buildings all winter. About 150 of the whitetailed variety came down, from the inaccessible Rocky Mountain recesses when winter first set in and they have depended on rations given them daily by the forest rangers.

RICH, BURIED A PAUPER

Supposedly a pauper, J. Eggstein, who died at the poor farm and who is buried in the Potter's Field, was worth more than \$100,000, according to information reaching the county authorities at Hutchinson, Kan. A man who did not leave his name recently got affidavit of Eggstein's death from the superintendent of the poor farm, saying that the man had \$21,000 in a Kansas City bank and \$100,000 worth of bonds.

Eggstein was picked up on the street, supposedly a stranded harvest hand, last summer. He refused to give any information concerning himself, saying it was nobody's business.

SALT MADE FROM SEA WATER

Salt made from sea water is the product of a large California industry. The sea water is taken from San Francisco Bay during periods of maximum high tide, in May, June, July, August, September and October. The sea water enters the ponds, primarily through a slough, into the intake, consisting of tide pools, which is provided with large flood gates that automatically open when the water can run in, and close at the time

ebbs. From the intake pond the sea water is raised by a large paddle-wheel pump and goes through the ponds mentioned, gradually becoming more and more concentrated, until it reaches the crystallizing ponds. It is run into these to a depth of about six inches when it has reached a strength of about 25.5 degrees Baumé, or when crystals of salt begin to form. The industry is on a sound basis, although competition has been keen among producers; conditions are better than they are on the Atlantic coast, where large consignments of salt arrive at irregular intervals from Europe and tend to upset the market. Furthermore, the climatic conditions in those part of California where the so-called solar evaporation methods are practiced are fairly regular little or no rain falls between March and October. The total evaporation during a season, from March and through October, aggregate about 30 inches. Harvesting commences about the middle of July, when five to eight inches of salt is found.

LAUGHS

"Vy don't yer speak ter yer svell friëndt at der odder end of der car?" "Shush! She ain't paid her fare yet."

Wigwag—What do you find the greatest drawback to a literary career? Scribbler—Return postage.

She—Why do you want me to take the morning glory as my floral emblem? He—Because the morning glory knows when to shut up.

"We're getting on pretty well, now that we're carrying on the business together, aren't we, father?" "Oh, pretty well, my son. I do the business and you do the carrying on."

Edith came running in one day in great distress. "Oh, mother," she cried, "Mary has taken the nest egg out of the old hen's nest, and now how can she ever make another without any pattern to go by?"

"Indians, you know," said the wisely read man, are very stoical. "They're never known to laugh." "Oh! I don't know," replied the flippant person. The poet Longfellow made Minne-haha."

"How beautiful it is to see the sign of Spring everywhere," remarked the husband at the breakfast table. "I wish I could discover some evidence of it in my mattress," muttered the hall-room lodger.

"I thought you had a trained nurse to wait on your wife?" "So I have." "And now you're looking for more help?" "Yes, I find I have to have three or four maids to wait on the trained nurse."

"Why didn't you ask for your transfer as you entered the car?" demanded the conductor. "Because I saw a seat and wanted to get it before the man behind me could get it," the woman replied, calmly.

BRIEF BUT POINTED

TWO PET AIREDALES BRING MISTRESS GIN

Miss Lois Hopkins of Woodlawn avenue is being besieged with offers for her pet Airedales, Bill and Pat, following their latest exploit.

She was standing in her yard the other day when the two dogs came trotting out of the woods nearby carrying in their jaws a flat, brown object, which they laid at her feet with ingratiating barks. It proved to be a leather-covered quart flask of the type that fits snugly in an automobile door-pocket and it was full of gin.

They trotted off in the direction whence they came and returned in a few minutes with a pint bottle of the same spirits.

Miss Hopkins followed on their third trip, but found only some paper in which the flasks had been wrapped.

THIS DOG'S STOMACH PROVES DIAMOND MINE

Lucky, the Boston bull terrier belonging to Mrs. W. Messing of Gracean, M.L., which some time ago swallowed \$1,000 worth of diamond rings, was brought to Canton and operated upon by Dr. J. W. Carrigan, veterinarian. In its stomach were found two diamond rings, a penny, a quarter and a dime.

One of the rings, set with a two-carat diamond, was just as good as the day it was last worn by Mrs. Messing. The other had a 5½ carat diamond surrounded by eight small stones. All these stones were missing except one small one.

After the lawn grass had been cut, the house swept and searched and every conceivable place ransacked for the missing jewelry, Mr. Messing saw his pet chewing something, which proved to be the leg of an alarm clock.

Lucky was watched and was seen to swallow it. Some one suggested that two "stage rings" be used as a test, and the dog soon proved to be the thief. An X-ray examination settled the matter. The dog has survived the generalizing operation very well.

WEATHER SUPERSTITIONS DISPROVED BY SCIENCE

Several common superstitions concerning the weather have been dispelled by the Weather Bureau at Washington, says *Popular Mechanics*. In both Europe and America there is an old belief that a severe storm—the so-called "equinoctial gale"—is due about the date of either equinox, that is, March 21 or Sept. 22. According to the bureau there is no maximum of storm frequency either in this country or abroad close to the date of either equinox. Of course, in the past the storms do occur about these dates, but as they occur at all other times in the year, the bureau is unable to explain why they should be especially frequent at the equinoxes. Commenting on the bureau's influence on the weather, the bureau says: "Modern science is unable to find any evidence that the moon affects the weather to an ap-

preciable extent, and is unable to conceive of any reason why it should." The belief in "dry" and "wet" moons, indicated by the position of the lunar crescent in the evening sky, and a host of other notions, are denounced as merely idle superstitions.

A FRENCH CRIME MUSEUM

The old "Conciergerie," the medieval prison on the Island of the City in the heart of Paris, will be transformed into a "Museum of Justice and Police," where children of the primary and high schools may come to study the evolution of the methods of detecting crime and administering justice through the ages.

The somber walls of the prison, with its dark dungeons, still contain all the instruments of torture in use during feudal times to extract confessions from men charged with crimes or misdemeanors. Documents showing the plots, counterplots and intrigues of the Renaissance, and the uprising and violence of the nation during the Revolution have been preserved in its cellars.

A bill has been introduced in the Chamber of Deputies by M. Petitjean requesting the Government in view of the great crime waves now sweeping France—murder, acts of violence and thefts—to gather these historical relics into a museum, so as to instill into the minds of youth a salubrious fear and horror of crime.

All the political upheavals and religious wars of the last thousand years have contributed to the history of and left their mark upon the old prison. Originally it formed a part of the palaces of the kings of France. It was rebuilt by Saint Louis, and became a prison under Charles V, who in 1391 placed there in irons and chains a certain number of citizens of Nevers and the Nivernais, who had raised the standard of rebellion against his rule.

In the fifteenth century the Count of Armagnac, Grand Constable of France, six bishops, several members of Parliament and a number of women and children were massacred there without mercy by the populace.

Count Louis de Berquin, a nobleman from Picardy, was burned alive there by order of Francis I.

Catherine de Medici had Count Montmomery put to death within the prison walls.

Avallac, the assassin of Henry IV, was tortured and quartered in the yard which now serves as a stable for the horses of the Parisian mounted police.

Demiens, who attempted to slay Louis XV, and Catherine, the famous legendary prisoner of the prison under the last of the Bourbons.

During the Revolution more than 1,200 prisoners were packed in the building when the mob broke down the doors and massacred the majority of them.

Marie Antoinette, Mme. Elizabeth, the sister of Louis XVI, and Robespierre awaited their trails in the Conciergerie.

The aspect of the building is forbidding, three high towers commanding the entire island.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

E. P. WESTON, FAMOUS WALKER, QUILTS HIS FARM

Edward Payton Weston, world-famous walker who twice has journeyed across the continent on foot, has become a Pennsylvanian after a lifetime in New York State. Last month Weston, who lived in a lonely farmhouse near Plutarch, Ulster County, N. Y., was the victim of an attack of ruffians who shot him in the leg, broke into his house and barn and stole food and other articles. This led him, he says, to decide to move.

BATTLESHIP WEST VIRGINIA HAS NEW PHONE SYSTEM

More than 100 loud speakers, carrying the commands of officers to all parts of the vessel, have been installed on the battleship West Virginia as an improvement on the telephone systems in use on other units of the fleet, according to an announcement from the Western Electric Company.

These are grouped on five circuits, any or all of which can be connected to receive calls. They are operated from three talking stations, on the bridge while the ship is cruising, on the main deck aft while in port and in the control room during target practice and battle. A two-stage vacuum tube amplifier gives sufficient power for good transmission.

The loud speaker system is in addition to the telephone connections, of which the West Virginia has 220 lines for ordinary use. To handle the ship under battle conditions an entirely separate fire control telephone arrangement has been devised to link those points functioning as units. The equipment for this was also furnished by the Western Electric Company, but because of its secret nature no details can be made public.

Western Electric and naval engineers co-operated in working out the new telephone and loud speaking systems.

ESKIMOS ARE WORTH MILLIONS IN STOCK

Twenty years ago the Eskimos of Alaska had no stock, but now they control nearly \$5,000,000 worth of stock and property, according to William T. Lipp, superintendent of the Alaska division of the United States Bureau of Education. He has been here a long time, and has seen the Eskimos grow from a nomadic people to a people who are now beginning to settle down.

Because of the abundance of game, particularly caribou, and the fact that the Eskimos are now beginning to settle down, the government is beginning to look upon them as a people who are worth millions in stock. The government is now beginning to look upon them as a people who are worth millions in stock.

"Particular care must be exercised," said Mr. Lipp, "in handling the reindeer factor. Once the reindeer factor is handled, the Eskimos will be worth millions in stock."

it. For that reason the Eskimo herders wear gantlet reindeer gloves and a reindeer-skin parka, and also spread reindeer skin in the sleds on which the little creatures are placed until the herd rounds up for the night and they can be delivered to their mothers.

In bringing over the herds from the Point Barrow region it will be necessary to drive them to the Yukon River, there to load them on specially constructed barges, on which they will be towed up the river to Nenana, where they will be shipped by the Alaska Railroad to Cantwell.

It is estimated there is a strip of 100 miles square in this vicinity suitable to reindeer grazing. With rail transportation at hand those interested in the industry predict that some day before long reindeer meat will be as common as mutton in the markets of the states.

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Founder of Famous Merke Institute, Fifth Avenue, New York

AFTER 17 years' experience in treating baldness—which included long years of experimentation in Heidelberg, Paris, Berlin, and other centers of scientific research—I have discovered a startling new way to promote hair growth.

At the Merke Institute, Fifth Avenue, New York—which I founded—I have treated scores of prominent stage and social celebrities. Many have paid as high as \$500 for the results I have brought them.

Yet now, through a series of ingenious inventions, I have made it possible for everyone to avail themselves of my discovery—right in their own homes, and at a cost of only a few cents a day!

My Unusual Guarantee

I know you are skeptical. I know that you have tried perhaps dozens of different remedies and treatments without results. All right. Perhaps my treatment cannot help you either. I don't know. But I do know that it has banished falling hair and dandruff for hundreds of others. I do know that it has already given thick, luxuriant hair to people who long ago had despaired of regaining their hair. And I am so downright positive that it will do the same for you that I absolutely GUARANTEE to grow new hair on your head—and if I fail, then the test is free.

Entirely New Method

Actual Results

(Dozens of letters like the following are received every day by the Merke Institute)

"The top of my head is now almost covered with new hair about one-half inch long. I have been using your treatment for five years, but could never find anything to make my hair grow until your treatment." T. C.

"Ten years ago my hair started falling. Four years ago I discovered a perfect fall moon. I used everything—but without results. Today, however, thanks to your treatment, I have a new crop of hair one inch long." F. H. B.

What is my method? It is entirely different from anything you ever heard of. No massaging—no singeing—no "mange" cures—no unnecessary fuss or bother of any kind. Yet results are usually noticeable even after the very first few treatments.

Many people have the idea when the hair falls out and no new hair appears, that the hair roots are always dead. I have disproved this. For I have found in many cases that the hair roots were NOT dead, but merely dormant! Yet even if the



scalp is completely bare, it is now possible in the majority of cases to awaken these dormant roots, and stimulate an entirely new growth of hair! I KNOW this to be true—because I do it every day.

Ordinary measures failed because they did not penetrate to these dormant roots. To make a tree grow, you would not think of rubbing "growing fluid" on the bark. Instead you would get right to the roots. And so it is with the hair.

There is only one method I know about of penetrating direct to the roots and getting nourishment to them. And this method is embodied in the treatment that I now offer you. The treatment can be used in any home in which there is electricity.

Already hundreds of men and women who only recently were bald or troubled with thinning hair, have through this method, acquired hair so thick that it is the envy and admiration of their friends. As for dandruff and similar scalp disorders, these usually disappear after the first few applications.

Remember—I do not ask you to risk "one penny." You try it on my absolute GUARANTEE. If after 30 days you are not more than delighted with the growth of hair produced, then I'll gladly return every cent you have paid me. I don't want your money unless I grow hair on your head.

Free Booklet Explains Treatment

If you will merely fill in and mail the coupon below I will gladly send you—without cost or obligation—an interesting 32-page booklet, describing my treatment in detail.

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